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# READINGS FROM ST AUGUSTINE ON THE PSALMS

*BY* JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

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# PREFACE

THE *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, or Discourses on the Psalms, is, after the Confessions, the most beautiful of St Augustine's writings. It consists of thoughts suggested by the Psalms; that is the best that can be said of it. If by a commentator you understand one who accurately lays down the strict and proper sense of Scripture—alike the *literal sense* intended by the writer and by the Holy Ghost, and also the *mystical sense*, founded upon the literal, and intended by the Holy Ghost, and to a greater or less extent by the writer—under that understanding St Augustine, as here exhibited, is not a commentator, nor these *Enarrationes* a commentary. It is often hard to tell where the mystical sense of Scripture ends, and what is called the *accommodated sense* takes its place; but one may without hesitation assert that great part of these *Enarrationes* have "won their way," to borrow a Thucydidean phrase, into the *accommodated sense*, and do not yield any meaning intended there and then by the author of the passage under consideration. The *Enarrationes* are none the less beautiful, and in themselves true, for that; replete with divine unction, and though often without claim to be explanations of the text that suggested them, yet full of *the Holy Ghost and fire* (Matt. iii 11).

The *Enarrationes* make an immense folio (Maurist edition, vol. iv, pp. 1689). They are translated in the *Library of the Fathers* (Oxford, *circa* 1840), with which Newman was connected in his Anglican days. I have selected attractive passages, making my own translation.

J. R.

CAMPION HALL,
OXFORD.

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# READINGS FROM ST AUGUSTINE ON THE PSALMS

§ 1. *Every man your neighbour* (Ps. xxv).

Let none of you, brethren, think it the right thing to speak the truth with a Christian and tell lies to a heathen. Speak the truth with your neighbour. Now every one who with you is born of Adam and Eve is your neighbour. We are all neighbours to one another by the condition of our earthly nativity; we are otherwise brothers by the hope of our heavenly inheritance. You should reckon every man your neighbour, even before he is a Christian. You do not know what he is in God's eyes, you are ignorant how God has foreknown him. One day you laugh at a man adoring stone images; lo, he is converted and adores God, perhaps with greater religious fervour than you, who were laughing at him a little before. We find these hidden neighbours in the persons of men not yet in the Church. And therefore, not knowing the future, we are to hold every man for our neighbour, not merely in point of the condition of human mortality, whereby we are come upon this earth with the same lot, but likewise in point of that eternal inheritance, because we do not know what he is destined to be who now is nothing.

§ 2. *Temporal prosperity of the wicked* (Ps. xxv).

We are sailing on a lake, and wind and gales are not wanting; with the daily temptations of this world our bark is well-nigh full of water. Why is that but because *Jesus is asleep* (Luke viii 23)? If Jesus were not asleep in you, you would not suffer these storms, but have tran-

quillity within from Jesus watching in you. What means *Jesus is asleep?* Your faith in Jesus has fallen asleep. The gales of this lake get up, you see the wicked flourishing, good men in trouble, there is a temptation, there a billow, and your soul says: O God, is this thy justice, that the wicked should flourish and the good be in trouble? You say to God: Is this thy justice? And God says to you: Is this thy faith? Did I promise thee these things? Didst thou become a Christian to prosper in this world? Is it a torment to thee that the wicked prosper here, who afterwards shall be tormented with the devil? But how is it that thou sayest this? How is it that thou art troubled with the billows and storm in the lake? Because Jesus sleeps; that is, because thy faith that is of Jesus has gone to sleep in thy heart. What art thou to do to be delivered? Awaken Jesus, and say, *Master, we perish.* He will awake; that is, thy faith shall return to thee; and by this aid thou shalt consider in thy soul that the gifts that are given to the wicked shall not stay with them. But what is promised thee shall stay for ever.

§ 3. *Among the innocent* (Ps. xxv).

There is a heavenly altar, and he does not embrace that altar who does not wash his hands among the innocent. For as for this visible altar, many touch it who are unworthy, and God suffers his sacraments to be outraged for a time. But, brethren, shall the heavenly Jerusalem be as these visible walls? Not as thou art received along with the wicked within the walls of this church, so with the wicked shalt thou be received into Abraham's bosom. Fear not then: wash thy hands where thou offerest thy vows to God, where thou pourest forth thy prayers, where thy conscience is pure, where thou tellest God who thou art, and where, if perchance there be anything in thee that displeases God, he cures it to whom thou dost make confession.

§ 4. *All good of God* (Ps. xxv).

What means *That I may hear the voice of praise?* I will tell you if I can, by aid of the mercy of God and your prayers. To hear the voice of praise is to understand at heart that whatever is in thee of the evil of sins is thine own, while whatever is in thee of the good of righteous deeds is of God. So hear the voice of praise as not to praise thyself, even when thou art good; for by praising thyself as good thou becomest evil; humility had made thee good, pride maketh thee evil. Thou wert converted, and by thy turning and conversion thou wert made full of light. But whither wert thou turned? To thyself? If by turning to thyself thou couldst be enlightened, never possibly couldst thou be in darkness, because thou wouldst always be with thyself. Thy enlightenment has come about by thy conversion and turning to something which thou thyself art not. God is light. *For ye were at one time darkness, but now light in the Lord* (Eph. v 8). Besides the Lord there is no light. Therefore *what hast thou that thou hast not received* (1 Cor. iv 7)?

§ 5. *Christ's and Christ* (Ps. xxvi).

Not only is our Head anointed, but also his Body, which we are.[1] He is King (and as such, anointed), because he rules and leads us; Priest (and as such again anointed), because he intercedes for us. And he alone is Priest in such sort as to be himself likewise the Sacrifice. The Sacrifice which he offered to God was none other than himself. Besides himself he could find no other wholly pure, rational victim. As a Lamb unspotted he has shed his blood to redeem us, he incorporates us in himself, he makes us his members, that in him we too should be Christ. Therefore the anointing belongs to all Christians: we are

[1] "Christ" in Greek meaning "anointed." The Head is Christ and the Body is Christ; both are anointed, both together form one complete Christ.

the Body of Christ: we are all anointed: in that Body we are all Christ's and Christ, because in a manner the whole Christ is Head and Body.

§ 6. *Idea of the Good* (Ps. xxvi).

Let your heart go beyond all usual objects, let your idea transcend all thoughts that are wont to arise from the flesh, all that originates from the senses of the flesh, all imaginations, all trivial fancies. Cast all that out of your mind; whatever occurs, deny it; know the infirmity of your heart, and on the mere ground of any thought occurring that you can realise, say: " That is not it: for if it were it, it would not have occurred to me." Thus you will desire Good. What manner of Good? The Good of all good, whence all good is, a Good to which no term is added, descriptive of what good thing it is. In speaking of a good man, and a good field, and a good house, and a good animal, and a good tree, and a good body, and a good soul, you always add some specification to the word " good." There is a good sheerly and simply such, the Self-Good whereby all things are good; that is the joy of the Lord; that shall be the object of our contemplation.[1]

§ 7. *The good things of the Lord* (Ps. xxvi).

O good things of the Lord, sweet, undying, peerless, everlasting, unfailing, when shall I see you, good things of the Lord? I look to seeing you, but not in the land of the dying. *I look to seeing the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.* The Lord will rescue me from the land of the dying, he who for my sake deigned to take

[1] This is the doctrine of St Thomas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 14, *Quod ad cognoscendum Deum oportet uti via remotionis* (that to know God we must proceed by the way of negative differentiation). God is *not this* and *not that*, but he is more like *this* than *that;* and of higher created perfections we may say—in homely phrase, that he is " getting on that way."

his portion of earth from the land of the dying, and to die at the hands of the dying.

§ 8. *The heresy of Apollinaris* (Ps. xxix).

Those heretics said that our Lord Jesus Christ had not the human mind which we call "rational," the mind whereby man reasons, which other animals have not. They say that the Word of God itself stood him in place of such a mind. They were shut out. The Catholic faith rejected them and they made a heresy. It was established as a point of Catholic faith that that Man, whom the Wisdom of God took unto itself, had nothing less than the rest of men, so far as the integrity of nature goes; but something other than the rest of men as regards the excellence of person. Other men may be called partakers of the Word of God, having the Word of God; but none of them can be called the Word of God, which he is called when it is said, *the Word was made Flesh.* There were not wanting others of that erroneous school to say that the Man Christ, Mediator between God and men, not only had not a human mind, but not so much as a soul, but was simply the Word and flesh, without a man's soul, without a man's mind. Them also the Catholic Church disowned, and expelled them from the flock; and the dogma was confirmed that that Man had all things belonging to man, except sin.[1]

§ 9. *Necessities* (Ps. xxx).

*Thou hast saved my soul from her necessities.*[2] What are the necessities whence we wish our soul saved? Who can enumerate them? Who can adequately describe them?

[1] He had indeed no human personality, but that does not take off from the perfection of his nature, which is completed in a more excellent way by its union with the Person of the Word.

[2] ἐκ τῶν ἀναγκῶν, LXX. Ἀνάγκη is properly a bodily infliction, the grip of matter upon mind, *choking* (ἄγχων) the purpose of mind. This ceases with death, unless it be reproduced in the form of hell-fire.

Who can suggest suitable means for avoiding and escaping them? The first hard necessity among mankind is not knowing another man's heart, often thinking ill of a faithful friend, often thinking well of an unfaithful one.[1] O hard necessity! What can you do to see your brother's heart? There is nothing that you can do. Another greater necessity is not to see your own heart, what it will be like to-morrow. Then of the necessities essential to our mortal state; man must die, and no man wants to die. No man wills that which must be, whether he will or no. Hard necessity, to be unwilling over that which cannot be avoided! Were it possible, we should certainly refuse to die; we should wish to become what the angels are, but by exchange, not by death—*we wish not to be stripped, but to be overclothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life* (2 Cor. v 4). We wish to arrive at the Kingdom of God, but we wish it not by death; and yet Necessity says to thee, "This way shalt thou come." Man, dost thou hesitate to come this way, when by this way God has come to thee?—What again are the necessities of overcoming long-established lusts, and the evil habits of years? A hard fight it is to overcome habit. Thou seest how evil, how detestable, how wretched the act is, and yet thou doest it; thou didst it yesterday, thou art in the way of doing it to-day. What force snatches off thy standing? who carries thee off captive? Is it not *the law in thy members, fighting against the law of thy mind?* Cry out then, *Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom. vii 23-25).

§ 10. *Bad Catholics* (Ps. xxx).

Who are the enemies of the Church? Pagans? Jews? Worse than all these live bad Christians. The nets are

[1] Then think well of everybody, and you will avoid half of your mistakes. Still, as St Thomas says (2a-2ae, lx 4, ad 3), be on your guard against some.

cast, the Church is multiplied, innumerable fish are caught (Luke v 6). This multitude swells the crowds which so throng our churches at Eastertime, that the walls are scarce capable of containing them. How can one not be troubled at this multitude, when one sees the same persons filling the theatres and amphitheatres, who a little before filled the churches? The same persons engaged in wickedness, who a little before were engaged on the praises of God? The same persons blaspheming, who just now were answering Amen to God? Of such the prophet Ezechiel (xv 2) says that they are comparable to useless vine-twigs. Suppose the pagans to be forest-trees outside the Church; still something can be made of them, as of available timber you find wood suited to the carpenter; and though it be still knotty and crooked, and covered with bark, still it is apt to be hewn and adzed and planed and made fit to enter into some structure of human utility. But of vine-twigs cut off, carpenters can make nothing; fire alone awaits them. Attend, brethren. Though a vine-twig remaining in the vine is everywhere preferred to a forest tree, because the twig bears fruit and that tree bears none, nevertheless, compare the forest tree with that same vine-twig cut off, you understand the tree to be the better, because the carpenter can make something of it, whereas the other is of interest only to the fireman who feeds the furnace. The wicked in the enjoyment of my sacraments, says the Psalm, live worse lives than they who have never approached them. Why should we not say it out in plain language, when we are expounding a psalm? If at other times perchance we dare not say such things, at least let the necessary duty of the expositor carry with it the free speech of the admonition.

§ 11. *The child that will not be weaned* (Ps. xxx).

*I have hoped in thee, O Lord.* Nothing more wholesome, nothing more secure. You had a mind to imitate

a certain person; you found him not satisfactory; away with that imitation. You looked out for another; something there also displeased you; you sought a third, and even he was not to your liking. Are you to be lost, because this or that man did not suit you? Take away your hope from man; for *cursed is he that putteth his trust in man* (Jer. xvii 5). If you still go looking for a man, and seek to imitate him and hang on to him, you still crave after a milk diet, and will become a μαμμόθρεπτος,[1] as those children are called who protract the period of their sucking beyond what is becoming. To use milk is as it were to wish one's food to pass through human flesh, that is, to live by man. Make yourself fit to sit at table: take your food whence the man you admire has taken his, or perhaps has not taken it. Perhaps it has been an advantage that you fell on a bad man when you thought to find a good one—an advantage, that in that human breast you found bitterness, were repelled by that disappointment, and invited to stronger meat. This is what nurses do to *mammothrepti*: they put something bitter upon their nipples, to disgust the children and make them quit the breast and open their mouths to ordinary food. Therefore let a man say: *I have hoped in thee, O Lord; thou art my God.* Thou art my God; out upon Donatus, out upon Caecilianus; neither the one nor the other is my God. I do not march under the name of any man, I hold by the name of Christ (*cf.* 1 Cor. i 12, 13).

§ 12. *Invoking God* (Ps. xxx).

You *invoke* God when you *call in* God to yourself. To invoke him is to invite him into the house of your heart. You would not dare to invite so great a Householder unless you saw your way how to prepare him a habitation. Imagine God saying to you: "Lo, thou hast invoked me, I come to thee, what awaits me when I enter in? Shall I

[1] The word is wrongly explained by Liddell and Scott.

endure such filth as I find in thy conscience? Thou callest me into thy heart, and it is full of rapines, blasphemies, adulteries, frauds and evil desires." I put the question in short to the covetous man: "Dost thou invoke God?" "Why dost thou invoke God?" "That he may give me gain." "It is gain then that thou invokest, not God; thou makest God the minister of thy gain; so cheap has God become to thee. Wouldst thou invoke God? Call upon him for nothing (*gratis invoca*)."[1]

§ 13. *The World's contempt of Christ* (Ps. xxx).

Would you not have him despised by those who love honours, him who put up with such insults? Would you not have him despised by those who make great account of this life, him who died? Would you not have him despised by those who think it a disgrace to be sentenced to the death of the cross, him who was crucified? Would you not have him despised by the rich, him who led a poor life in the world, though he was the world's Creator? As for all these things that men love, Christ would not have them, not that he had it not in his power to possess them, but that by having them not he might show how they should be contemned; the consequence is that all they who love these things contemn him. And every one of his servants who wishes to follow in his footsteps, walking in that lowliness wherein he has learnt that his Lord did walk, is despised in Christ as a member of Christ; and when Head and members are despised, the whole Christ himself is despised, because the whole Just One himself is Head and Body. Against whom is the reproach now flung in his teeth, that he is a Christian? So few non-Christians are left, that it is rather a case of men being reproached

[1] Do not, as it were, ask God to pay his footing in coin of this world when he visits your heart. St Augustine's words are directed against those who, when they pray, want temporal blessings, but not God himself at all. The prayers of such sinners, so praying, are not heard.

for not being Christians than of their daring to reproach any for being Christians.[1] And yet I say to you, brethren, begin, any one who hears me, begin to live like a Christian, and see if your doing so is not brought up against you even by Christians, Christians in name, not in life, not in behaviour. No one feels this who has not tried it. Do you wish to live as a Christian? Do you wish to follow in the footsteps of your Lord? If your wish to walk in the way of the Lord, then hope in God even in the sight of men, blush not over your hope. As he lives in your heart, so let him dwell in your mouth; for not without cause did Christ wish his sign to be placed on our forehead, the region where shame dwells, that a Christian should never blush over the reproaches of Christ.

§ 14. *Faith at work* (Ps. xxxi).

Do not worry yourself over the work of faith; add to it hope and love, and do not worry about work. Love by itself can never be idle. What but love in any man is the mainspring even of evil activity? Show me any love idle and doing nothing. Abominations, adulteries, crimes, murders, deeds of lust, is not some love the motive principle of all these? Purify, then, your love; the stream that now runs into the sewer turn on to the garden. Is it said to you, "Love nothing"? Far from it. Lazy, dead, detestable, miserable shall you be if you love nothing. Love, but look to what you love. The love of God, the love of your neighbour, is called charity; the love of the world, the love of this life, is called cupidity. Let cupidity be restrained, and charity aroused.

§ 15. *Warning against Antinomianism* (Ps. xxxi).

Give me, then, your attention, otherwise by misunderstanding you throw yourselves into an abyss of fancied impunity in sinning; and I am free, as the Apostle (Paul)

[1] About A.D. 420.

was free from all who misunderstood him. They were only too glad to misunderstand, to escape pursuing good works. Be rid of the number of such brethren. It is said in a psalm (xxxv 4) of a man of that stamp, *He would not understand to do good.* You, then, must wish to understand that you may do good. Have no lack of a clear understanding. What is a clear understanding? Let none boast of his good works done before he received the faith. Let none be slack in doing good works after he has received the faith.

§ 16. *Humility peculiarly Christian* (Ps. xxxi).

They who swim in a deluge of many waters draw not nigh to God. What is a deluge of many waters? A multiplicity of conflicting doctrines. The doctrine of God is one, not many waters, but one water, either of the sacrament of Baptism or of wholesome doctrine. It is said of the doctrine whereby we are watered through the Holy Ghost: *Drink thy water from thine own cisterns, and from the springs of thine own wells* (Prov. v 15). To those springs the wicked do not approach. What is that water but the doctrine that teaches: *It is good to confess to the Lord* (Ps. xci 2)? This is the water of confession of sins, the water of humiliation of heart, the water of wholesome life of a man who casts himself down, presumes nothing of himself, attributes nothing proudly to his own abilities. This water flows in none of the books of those strangers to the faith, Epicureans, Stoics, Manichees, Platonists. Everywhere there you find excellent precepts of morals and discipline, but this humility is not found there. The way of humility starts from another quarter, it comes from Christ, who, high by nature, came in humble guise. In this humility, then, there is access to God. But in the deluge of many waters, of people extolling themselves against God and teaching proud impieties, men shall not approach God.

§ 17. *Right of heart* (Ps. xxxi).

Who are the right of heart? They who do not resist God. Between a right heart and a wrong heart there is this difference: he is right of heart who does not ascribe otherwise than to the just will of God whatever he suffers contrary to his own will—afflictions, griefs, labours, humiliations—not attributing any lack of wisdom to God in that he scourges this man and spares those. They are perverse of heart, wrong and crooked, who say of all the ills they suffer that they suffer them unfairly, and impute unfairness to him by whose will they suffer, or who, if they dare not ascribe to him unfairness, take away his government. This is the sort of language they use: "Inasmuch as he cannot act unfairly, and it *is* unfair that I should suffer and my neighbour not suffer; for though I allow I am a sinner, yet there are others worse than me, merry while I am in affliction; because then I am sure that this is unjust, sure also that God does nothing unjust, therefore I conclude that God does not govern human affairs, nor has any care of us." Therefore these men, wrong at heart, or crooked of heart, have between them three opinions. One denies God altogether, as *the fool said in his heart, There is no God* (Ps. xiii 1). Another calls him unjust, a third removes from him the government of the world. But this is the right of heart: *As it hath pleased the Lord, so hath it been done : may the name of the Lord be blessed* (Job i 21). He did not say, "The Lord hath given, the devil hath taken away." Take care that you do not say, "The devil has taken this away from me." Refer the blow that has fallen on you absolutely to God. The devil does nothing to you without the permission of the Higher Power, either for your punishment or for your instruction. God *scourgeth every son whom he receiveth* (Heb. xii 6). Really, every son? Every son without exception. Even his Only-begotten was without sin, but not without the scourge.

Hence that said Only-begotten, bearing thy infirmity and prefiguring thy person in himself, as the Head bearing the person of his Body, drawing nigh to his Passion, was saddened on the part of the Humanity that he bore, to gladden thee—saddened to console thee. Surely the Lord might have gone without sadness as he went to his Passion. If the soldier could, could not the General? How do I say the soldier could? Mark Paul exulting as he approaches his passion. *The time of my dissolution is at hand: I have fought the good fight: for the rest there remaineth for me the crown of justice* (2 Tim. iv 6 *sq.*). See how he exults at coming to his passion. So, then, the recipient of the crown rejoices, the giver of the crown is made sad. What did he carry to make him sad? The infirmity of some who are saddened at the approach of tribulation or death. Lo, thou didst wish to live; but God has willed otherwise. Let thy will be straightened out to the will of God, not the will of God bent aside to thine. Thy will is crooked, God's will is the rule: let the rule hold, that the crooked may be corrected by the rule. See how our Lord Jesus Christ teaches this lesson. *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me* (Matt. xxvi 38). Thus he shows the human will. But see the right heart. *Yet not my will, but thine be done.* This, then, is what thou art to do, rejoicing in what happens to thee. Or if any frailty of human will creep over thee, let it be quickly turned straight to God, that thou mayest be of the number of those to whom it is said, *Glory, all ye right of heart.*

§ 18. *A short way to please God* (Ps. xxxii).

*Exult, ye righteous, in the Lord.* Let the unrighteous exult in the world: the world comes to an end, and there is an end to the exultation of the unrighteous. A short rule it is: he pleases God who is pleased with God (*ille placet Deo, cui placet Deus*). And think not this a light matter.

When God wills to do something against the will of men—because he is the Lord, and knows what he is doing, and does not so much attend to our will as to our advantage—they who prefer the fulfilment of their own will to that of God wish to bend God to their will, and to adjust their will to God. Such men—I am loth to say it, but I will say it, for you know with what truth I say it—they are better pleased with a pantomime than with God.[1]

§ 19. *Comfort for the faithful* (Ps. xxxii).

Therefore, ye just, ye righteous, exult in the Lord, for praise becomes you. Let none of you say, "Who am I, to be called just?" Do not cast yourselves down, and despair of yourselves. You are men, made to the image of God. He who made you men, for you has been made Man himself, that you should be many sons adopted to the eternal inheritance. The Blood of the Only-begotten has been shed for you. If you are made cheap in your own eyes, thinking of your earthly frailty, value yourselves by the price that has been paid for you; think duly what you eat, what you drink, to what you answer Amen.[2] Are we telling you to be proud, that you should dare to attribute any perfections to yourselves? Well, I will not ask you about your righteousness: perhaps none of you would dare to answer, "I am righteous"; but I ask you about your faith. As none of you dares to answer, "I am righteous," so none of you dares to say, "I am not one of the faithful." I do not yet ask what you live up to, but what you believe in. You will answer, you believe in Christ. Have you not heard the Apostle: *The righteous man liveth by faith*

[1] The *pantomimus* of St Augustine was not a performance, but a performer, who represented things by dancing and dumb show, often verging into the obscene.

[2] The old form for giving Communion was this: the ministering priest said *Corpus Christi*, to which the communicant answered, *Amen*.

(Rom. i 17)? Your faith is your righteousness: because, if you believe, you are on your guard; if you are on your guard, you try; and God knows your endeavour, and beholds your good will, and marks your struggle with the flesh, and exhorts you to fight, and to conquer, and waits for your striving, and supports your faintness, and crowns your victory.

§ 20. *The Eucharist, the abasement of Christ* (Ps. xxxiii).

The sacrifice of Aaron was taken away, and the sacrifice according to the order of Melchisedech began. Christ would have our salvation be in his Body and Blood. How came he to entrust to us his Body and Blood? Out of his humility. But for his being humbled he could never be our meat or our drink. Look up at his high estate. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* There you have everlasting food. The angels eat it, the higher powers eat it, the heavenly spirits eat it, and eating they are fed, and that which satisfies and gladdens them still remains whole. But how could man possibly reach that food? It was needful for that provision to turn into milk, that it might reach babes. And how can food turn into milk except by passing through flesh? That is what a mother does. What the mother eats, the infant eats; but because the infant is unfit to feed on bread, the mother makes the bread into flesh, and by the humility of breast and milk feeds the infant with the said bread. How then has the Wisdom of God fed us with that bread? Because *the Word has been made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us.* Here you see humility. *Man hath eaten the bread of angels* (Ps. lxxvii). The eternal Word, equal to the Father, on which angels feed, *that* has man eaten. *And he was carried in his own hands* (1 Kings xxi 13). How is that possible, brethren? A man can be carried in the hands of others, but no man in his own hands. We are at a loss for the literal application of this text to David,

but we find it fulfilled in Christ. Christ was carried in his own hands, when, delivering his Body to us, he said, " *This is my Body* " : for he carried that Body in his own hands. . . . When he gave over to us his own Body and Blood, he took in his hands that which the faithful know, and himself carried himself in a manner, when he said, *This is my Body*.[1]

§ 21. *The ass's colt* (Mark xi 7; Ps. xxxiii).

*Let the meek hear and be glad.* The Lord wants meek beasts of burden: be the Lord's beast of burden; that is, be meek. He sits upon thee, he guides thee; be not afraid of stumbling and falling headlong. Weakness indeed is thine, but consider who sits at thy head. An ass's colt thou art, but thou bearest Christ. People perhaps are angry at being likened to the colt on which Christ sat; and some proud and haughty folk will say, " Lo, he makes asses of us." Whoever says this, let him be the Lord's ass, that he may not be *the horse and the mule, who have no understanding* (Ps. xxxi 9). The horse and mule rear up at times, and in their ferocity fling their rider. They are broken in with bridle, bit and blows, till they learn to submit and carry their master. But do thou be meek, and bear thy Lord, ere the bridle press thy mouth hard. Have no mind to be praised for thyself, but let him be praised who sits on thee, and thou shalt say, *In the Lord my soul shall have praise : let the meek hear, and be glad.* When they who are not meek hear, they are not glad, but angry; and they are the folk

[1] This is clear evidence of St Augustine's belief in an Objective Real Presence, no mere Reformers' Receptionist Presence of the Body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Such was the Church tradition of the fifth century. The text, however, of 1 Kings xxi 13, has nothing to do with the Holy Eucharist. *Ferebatur in manibus suis* is, in the Septuagint, παρεφέρετο ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ. The compound παρεφέρετο for the simple *ferebatur* removes the difficulty. The meaning apparently is, *He played the maniac with his hands.*

who say we have made asses of them. But let them that are meek deign to hear themselves called so, and so be what they are called.

§ 22. *A good conscience* (Ps. xxxiii).

How reluctant they are to go into their own houses who have bad wives! How glad they are to get out to the market-place,[1] and sad when the hour comes for going home! for there they will come in for tiresomeness, complaints, bitterness, overturnings; there is no order in a house where there is no peace between man and wife, and it is better to rove abroad. How much more miserable are they who are loth to go back into their own consciences, lest they be there upset by the strife of sins! Clean thy heart that thou mayest be able to return to it willingly. Away with filthy lusts, away with the taint of avarice, away with the corruption of superstitious practices, away with sacrileges and evil thoughts, away with hatred even against an enemy; away with all these things, enter into thy heart, and thou shalt rejoice there. The very cleanliness of thy heart shall delight thee and make thee pray, as when thou comest to a place, and findest silence there, and quiet and cleanliness; "Let us pray here," thou sayest, and the arrangement of the place (*compositio loci*) delights thee, and thou believest that God will hear thee there.

§ 23. *The good old days* (Ps. xxxiii).

Is there any of you who does not *wish for life and love to see good days?* Is not this your daily complaint? "How long are we to suffer this? Things go every day from bad to worse; there were more joyful and better days in our fathers' time." Oh, if you were to ask those fathers, you would find them uttering the like complaints of their days. "Our fathers," you would hear them say, "were happy,

[1] Or public-house.

we are miserable: there was that Emperor; we thought when he was dead we should have some relief; his successors are worse." *Who is the man who wisheth for life and loveth to see good days?* Let him not seek for good days here. He is seeking for a good thing, but not seeking it in the region in which it is to be found. It is as though you were looking for some just man in the city in which he had not his home, and it were said to you: "It is a good man that you are looking for, a great man, but you waste your time looking for him here, you will never find him." You are seeking good days; let us seek them together, but not here. The Lord himself had not good days in this world, but insults, injuries, the Cross. Let not the Christian complain, let him see in whose footsteps he treads.

§ 24. *Rescue* (Ps. xxxiii).

*The righteous have cried, and the Lord hath heard them, and rescued them from all their tribulations.* The three children (Dan. iii 49) were righteous; from the furnace they cried to the Lord, and in their hymns of praise the fires grew cold. The flame could not draw nigh to hurt these innocent and righteous children praising God. But someone says, "I have cried, and he has not rescued me." Fear not; if he does not rescue thee bodily, he will rescue thee spiritually. He who took the three children out of the flame, did he take the Maccabees out of the flame? Were not the former singing hymns in the fires, and the latter expiring in the fires? The God of the three children, is he not also the God of the Maccabees? He rescued the one, and he did not rescue the other; nay, he rescued both, but he so rescued the three children as to confound their carnal persecutors; while the Maccabees he rescued in such fashion that their persecutors went into greater punishments, thinking that they had overpowered the saints of God. He rescued Peter when the angel came to him in prison and said, "Arise, go out." Had Peter

forfeited his righteousness when the Lord did not rescue him from the cross? Yea, he rescued him then. I should say he heard him then more than before. When he first rescued him, how much he had to suffer afterwards. Afterwards he sent him there where he could suffer no evil.

§ 25. *A bad death, a grand funeral* (Ps. xxxiii; Luke xvi 22).

If we are Christians, let us believe. If we do not believe, let no one pretend to be a Christian. It is faith that carries us through. As the Lord has told you, so things are. Are we to say, "The astrologer tells you, and it is true; Christ tells you, and it is false"? What sort of death did that rich glutton die? Such a death as was to be expected in purple and fine linen. How sumptuous! How ostentatious! What a grand funeral was there! How many perfumes were burnt over the burial of that corpse! And the man all the while in hell, in torments, desired one drop of water from the finger of that despised beggar to cool his burning tongue, and obtained it not. Learn, then, the truth of the saying, *The death of sinners is very evil;* and ask no questions of biers strewn with costly coverings, and a body wrapped up in much wealth, a procession of mourners, a household in grief, an officious crowd going before and coming after the hearse, a tomb resplendent with marble and gold. If you ask these objects, they will answer you with a lie, that the death of many who have been no light sinners but downright scoundrels is a very good death, seeing that they have earned thereby to be so mourned, so embalmed, so laid out, so carried forth, so buried. But ask the Gospel, and it will show your faith that rich man's soul burning in torments, reaping no profit at all from all the honours and attentions which the vanity of survivors has paid to his dead body.

§ 26. *Old Testament blessings* (Ps. xxxiv).

God comforts us here as travellers on the road, meaning us to understand that it is a road. All that you make use of in this life should be to you as a wayside inn to a traveller, not as a house and home. Remember that you have got over part of the road, and that other part of the road remains; that you have turned aside for refreshment, not for desertion. There are those who say: "God, the good, the great, the supreme, the invisible, the eternal, the incorruptible, means to give us life everlasting, and the incorruption which he has promised in the resurrection; but as for these worldly and temporal things they belong to the demons and to the powers of darkness." So saying, when they are entangled in the love of these temporal things, they quit God, as though such things did not belong to him, and seek by nefarious arts to provide themselves with temporalities. God's watchful providence has marked that opinion, and to show that all belongs to him, even temporal things, which he gives, like a doctor distributing medicines, to whom he wills and when he wills, in due season, knowing to whom to give and to whom not to give, knowing the sick man's disease better than the sick man himself—willing to show this, I say, God has set apart distinct times of the Old and of the New Testament. In the Old, the promises are of earthly goods; in the New, of the kingdom of heaven. Most of the commandments are the same, of worshipping God and living aright, in this dispensation and in that, but the reward is not the same. To them it was said: "Obey, that you may receive the land of promise, that you may reign therein, that you may overcome your enemies and not fall under their yoke, that you may have abundance on the earth and beget children." These were earthly promises, but at the same time figures of other and better things to come.

§ 27. *My God and my all* (Ps. xxxiv).

If the Emperor were to say to you, "Ask what you wish," what dignities and offices of State would come into your mouth! What a many things you would propose to get and give to others! Now God says to you, "Ask what you wish," what are you going to ask? Shake up your thought, arouse your greediness, put out and widen your desire to the utmost; it is not any ordinary mortal but Almighty God who has said, "Ask what you wish." If you are a lover of estates, you will desire the whole earth, that all who are born should be your tenants or slaves. And what when you own the whole earth? You will ask for the sea, in which, however, you cannot live; in this greediness the fishes will have the better of you. But perhaps you will have the islands for your estates. Transcend them and ask for the air, though you cannot fly; stretch your cupidity to the sky, say that the sun is yours and the moon and stars, because he who has made all things has said, "Ask what you wish." Still you will find nothing more precious, nothing more excellent, than him who has made all things. Ask for him who has made them, and in him and of him you will have all that he has made. All precious, because all beautiful, but what more beautiful than he? And there is nothing that he more wishes to give than himself. If you can find anything better, ask for it. If you do ask for anything else, you will do him an injustice and do harm to yourself, preferring to him that which he has made, when he who has made it wishes to give himself to you.

§ 28. *A retreat* (Ps. xxxiv).

We are taught, brethren, because we belong to the Body of Christ and are members of Christ—we are taught and admonished, in all our tribulation, not to think how we are to answer our enemies, but how we are to propitiate

God by prayer, particularly to the effect that we may not be overcome by temptation. There is no greater, no better resource in tribulation than to retire from the noise of the world and enter into the inner chambers of one's mind, there to call upon God where no one sees either him that groans or him that gives relief; to shut the door of that chamber against all trouble borne in from without; to humble oneself in the confession of sin; to magnify and praise God, alike for his rebuke and his consolation. This absolutely and in every way is the right course to take.

§ 29. *Persecution* (Ps. xxxiv).

Mark, brethren, the glory of the Church that now is.[1] Look back upon her past ignominies. Look back upon the time when Christians were everywhere driven out, and, wherever found, were mocked, beaten, slain, exposed to wild beasts, burnt, with men rejoicing over them. What befell the Head, befell the Body also. As it was with Christ on the Cross, so it was with his Body in all that past persecution. Nor even now do their persecutions cease. Wherever they find a Christian, they are wont to insult him, harry him, laugh at him, call him stupid, tasteless, a man devoid of brains and knowledge of the world. Let them do what they like, Christ is in heaven. Let them do what they like, he has honoured the instrument of his punishment, he has planted his cross on the foreheads of all. The irreligious man is allowed to scoff, but not to commit atrocity. Nevertheless, from what his tongue brings forth, we understand what he carries in his heart.

§ 30. *All day long thy praise* (Ps. xxxiv).

And whose tongue can endure to busy itself all day long with the praise of God? Lo, the discourse has lengthened

[1] In Africa, A.D. 420-430, just before the irruption of the Vandals.

out a little, and you are tired. Who can hold out praising God all day long? I suggest a remedy whereby you may praise God all day long, if you wish. Whatever you do, do it well, and you have praised God. When you sing a hymn, you praise God; what is the use of your tongue unless your mind join in the praise? You cease your hymn-singing, you go to take some refreshment: do not drink to excess, and you have praised God. You go off to bed: do not rise to do evil, and you have praised God. You do business: practise no fraud, and you have praised God. You cultivate the ground: start no quarrel, and you have praised God. In the innocence of your works prepare to praise God all the day long.

§ 31. *Don't see it? Why not?* (Ps. xxxv).

Men do not understand how to live well, not for lack of ability, but for lack of will. There are indeed cases in which a man tries to understand a thing, and for infirmity of the flesh cannot, because *the earthly dwelling weigheth down the mind, thinking many things* (Wisd. ix 15). But it is quite a different and a worse case when the human spirit acts against itself, so that what it might understand, with good will, it understands not, not for the difficulty of the matter, but because the will is contrary. This is when people love their sins and hate the commandments of God. For the Word of God is thy adversary, if thou art a friend to thine own iniquity. But if thou art an adversary to thine own iniquity, the Word of God is thy friend and an adversary to thine iniquity. If, then, thou hatest thine iniquity, thou alliest thyself with the Word of God, and there will be two of you in alliance to destroy it, thyself and the Word of God. Thyself of thyself, of thy own powers, thou canst do nothing; he aids thee who has sent thee his word, and so iniquity is overcome. If thou hatest it, God has forgiven it, and thou art free; but if thou lovest it, it is contrary to thy disposition to understand

anything that is said against it. Suppose a man to ask how the Son is equal to the Father: he has made his act of faith, he seeks to understand, he cannot as yet do so. Before he is able for this, he is nourished in faith, and endeavours to understand. Is this other also matter of endeavouring to understand: *What thou wouldst not have done to thyself, do not to another* (Tob. iv 16)? When thou art not minded to understand this, the difficulty is put down to thy own will.[1]

§ 32. *The fight for purity* (Ps. xxxv).

So long as you hate wickedness, you can hardly be surprised into doing anything wicked. What says the Apostle? *Let not sin reign in your mortal body, to obey its lusts* (Rom. vi 12).[2] When does concupiscence begin not to be? *When this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality* (1 Cor. xv 54). Before that, there is the delight of wickedness in the body, but greater is the delight of pleasure in the word of wisdom, the commandment of God. Overcome sin and its pleasure. Hate sin and wickedness, to unite yourself with God who hates it along with you. Now there are in you certain fleshly delights; there shall be then none at all, in the day in which you shall fight no longer. It is one thing not to fight, and be in true and perpetual peace; another thing to fight and overcome; another thing not to fight at all, but to be the slave of passion.[3] For there are men who absolutely do not fight at all, such as the man of whom

[1] The man does understand it speculatively, but will not see it in its practical application to himself.

[2] By *sin* here is commonly understood concupiscence, not that concupiscence is sin of itself, but because, as the Council of Trent says (sess. 6), "it came by (original) sin, and leads to (actual) sin."

[3] Aristotle, and St Thomas after him, rehearses four similar stages of four men whom he calls respectively *σώφρων, ἐγκρατής, ἀκρατής ἀκόλαστος.*

the psalmist says, *He hath not hated wickedness.* How should a man fight against it when he does not hate it? There are men who begin to fight, but because they presume on their own strength, they become proud and are crushed. These fight, but are overcome. Who is it that fights and is not overcome? He who presumes on him who has ordered the fight, and overcomes the enemy by the aid of him who has ordered it (Rom. vii 25).

§ 33. *Wait for your wages* (Ps. xxxv).

That Hebrew people desired earthly goods, the kingdom of Jerusalem, the subjugation of enemies, abundant crops, health for themselves, health for their children. Such were their desires, and such things did they receive: they were *kept under the law* (Gal. iii 23). They desired of God those good things which he gives even to beasts, because the Son of God had not yet come to them to make them true sons of men. The prophets came to them and announced Christ; and there were some who understood and had hope of the future, to receive the mercy that is in heaven. There were others who had none but carnal desires of earthly and temporal happiness. Their feet slipped to the making or adoring of idols. When God admonished them, and scourged them in the things in which they took delight; when he took those things away, and they suffered from famine, wars, pestilences, diseases, then they turned to idols. The goods which they ought to have desired as no great thing (read *non pro magno*) from God, they desired of idols, and forswore God. They noticed that the goods which they sought abounded in the houses of the impious and criminal; and they thought that their worship of God was thrown away, because he did not give them an earthly reward. O man, you are God's employee; the time for receiving your wages is afterwards; why do you cry for your pay at once before doing your work? If a workman came to your house,

would you give him his wage before he did his work? You would think him a wrong-headed man if he said: "I will first take my wages, and then work." You would be angry with him; why? For not having faith in you, you, a man capable of falsehood. What wonder if God is angry with you for not having faith in him, the very Truth! What he has promised, he means to give: he deceives not, because he is the Truth who promises. But you fear lest perhaps he may not have wherewithal to give? He is almighty. Fear not lest he live not to give. He is immortal. Fear not lest a successor come in his place. He is perpetual. If you wish your employee to presume on you all day long, do you believe in God all your life long, for your life is but a moment of time before God.

§ 34. *A divine inebriation* (Ps. xxxv).

*They shall be made drunk with the plenty of thy house.* The psalmist promises us something indescribably great. He wishes to utter it, and utters it not, cannot utter it, and can we understand? I dare to affirm, my brethren, even of those holy tongues, and hearts whereby the truth has been announced to us, that what they announced cannot be uttered and conceived. The matter is great and unspeakable, and they themselves only saw it *in part*, *darkly* (1 Cor. xiii 12). How shall we be when we shall see face to face what their heart laboured in conceiving, and their tongue could not bring forth in a form that men could understand! What hard stress was there on the psalmist to say, *They shall be made drunk by the plenty of thy house?* He sought a word for his utterance from human life; and because he saw men swilling themselves in drunkenness, taking wine immoderately, and losing their senses, he saw what to say, because when that unspeakable joy shall be attained, the human mind in a manner is lost, and becomes divine, and is made drunk by the plenty of the house of

God. Hence in another psalm it is said, *the chalice that inebriateth me, how goodly it is!* (Ps. xxii). With this cup the martyrs were already made drunk, when they went to their passion and did not recognise their friends. What is such a mark of drunkenness as not to recognise weeping wife, children and parents? They did not recognise them, they did not think to have them before their eyes. Wonder not, they were drunk. How were they drunk? They had taken the cup of which it is said, *I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord* (Ps. cxv). I have spoken as I could, and I see as I can, and I cannot speak as I see.

§ 35. *The day of judgement, in what sense "not known" to the Son* (Mark xiii 32; Ps. xxxvi).

The last day is a terrible coming event for them to hear of, who will not secure themselves by a good life, but wish for a long and evil life. To good purpose God has willed that day to be hidden, that our heart may be ever in ready expectation of what it knows must surely come, and knows not when it is to come. Because our Lord Jesus Christ was sent as our Teacher, he said that even the Son of man did not know that day, because it lay not in his office of Teacher to make it known to us. There is nothing that the Father knows that the Son does not know, since the Father's knowledge is his wisdom, and his wisdom is his Son, his Word. But because it was not expedient for us to know what he knew, who had come to teach us, but not to teach us what was not expedient for us to know, he not only taught something as a master, but likewise as a master he refrained from teaching something. Thus by a fashion of speech the Son is said not to know what he does not teach, that is, he is said not to know what he makes us not to know. By the same fashion of speech we call that a joyful day which makes us joyful, and a sad day which

makes us sad, and dull cold that which makes us dull. God said to Abraham, *Now I know that thou fearest God*, which we understand, "Now I have made thee know" (Gen. xxvii 12). *The Lord your God tempteth you, to know if you love him* (Deut. xiii 3). You will be ascribing great ignorance—which you will understand would be a sacrilegious thing to do—to our Lord God, supreme and true, if you take it to mean that by tempting us he gains knowledge on a point whereon before he was ignorant. "He tempts you, to know," means, "He tempts you, to make you know." So, then, that Christ knows not that day, means that he keeps us in ignorance of it, that that may remain unknown which it is inexpedient to have revealed to us. As I have said, it is the property of a good master to know what to reveal and what to conceal. Hence we understand that not all things are to be brought out to hearers who are incapable of grasping all things.[1] So he says elsewhere, *I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now* (John xvi 12). And the Apostle: *I could not speak to you as spiritual men, but as carnal, as to babes in Christ : I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you could not bear it* (1 Cor. iii 1, 2). What is the lesson of this discourse? That since we know to our profit that the last day is to come, and are ignorant to our profit when it is to come, we should keep our conscience ready by living well; and then, far from fearing that last day, we shall even love it. It is a day that piles up trouble on the unbeliever, and ends the trouble of the faithful. In which of these plights you shall be, it is in your power to decide ere the day come;[2] once it has come, it will be no longer in your power. Choose, then, while there is time; because that which God in mercy conceals, he in mercy delays.

[1] *Non omnia promenda esse, quae capere non possunt hi quibus promuntur*. See my Index to Newman's works, s.v. *Economy*.

[2] Not exactly the language of St Augustine's writing later in *De correptione et gratia*.

§ 36. *Misfits in every profession* (Ps. xxxvi).

*Two in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other left* (Luke xvii 34). By *bed* I suppose we are to understand *repose;* because there are those who neither wish to be troubled with the business of life, as married people are with their houses, households and children; nor do they do any work in the Church as ecclesiastical personages; labouring in the vineyard, but holding themselves too weak for their occupations, they retire into leisure and love to be quiet; and mindful of their infirmity they do not commit themselves to great actions, but, so to say, on the bed of their sickness they pray and beseech God.[1] This (monastic) profession, too, contains good men, and contains also misfits (*fictos*) who are not what they pretend to be; therefore, of them also *one shall be taken, and one left.* To whatsoever profession you turn, be ready to endure misfits;[2] otherwise, if you are not prepared for that, you will find what you did not expect, and will give up or be discouraged. He, therefore, who speaks to you wishes you to be ready for everything, while there is still time for him to speak, but not yet to judge, and for you to hear, but not yet repent in vain. Now repentance is not in vain, it will be in vain then. Then men will not fail to repent of having lived an evil life, but the justice of God will nowise consent to revoke what they by their injustice have let slip. It is God's justice now to impart mercy, then to exercise judgement. Is this just purpose hushed up in silence? Let any man who will argue and complain, if this message of Scripture is not recited and chanted the wide world over, nay, even if copies of the same are not continually on sale in public places.[3]

[1] On the monastic state compare the passage, *Magni viri, sancti, quotidie in hymnis, in orationibus, in laudibus Dei* (*Enarr.* in Ps. xcix).

[2] *Ad quamcumque professionem te converteris, para te pati fictos.*

[3] An interesting reference to the sale of copies of the Gospels in the fifth century.

§ 37. *Christ's terms* (Ps. xxxvi).

Now you judge it right to follow Christ, this is your purpose, this your choice, this your judgement. No one has shown you what he has promised, you hold his promise, you expect his performance; in the judgement, therefore, of your faith you have chosen to go after what you do not see. Your judgement is hidden, and for the time being it is censured and scoffed at by unbelievers. What have you believed? What has Christ promised you? That you shall be immortal, and that he will give you life everlasting? Where is that? When will he give it? How is it possible? Nevertheless, you prefer rather to go after Christ promising what you do not see than listen to the ungodly critic rebuking you for having believed what as yet you see not. This is your judgement; and what the value of your judgement is, for the present does not appear. In this world we may say it is always night. When then shall he *lead forth thy judgement as the noonday? When Christ shall appear, your life, then you too shall appear with him in glory* (Col. iii 4). When the day of judgement comes, and Christ comes, and gathers all nations to judgement, how shall it be then? Where will the wicked hide his unbelief, when I see my faith realised? Therefore, what are we to look for at present? Hardships, tribulations and temptations. And blessed is he that endures; for *he that persevereth to the end, he shall be saved* (Matt. xxiv 13).

§ 38. *Yet a little while* (Ps. xxxvi).

Go over the years from Adam to the present day; peruse the Scriptures; it is almost yesterday since he fell from paradise. So many measured centuries have rolled by; where are the times that have passed? So the few that remain will doubtless pass. If you had lived all the time from the day of Adam's banishment from paradise to the present day, certainly you would see that your life had not

been long, seeing that it had flown away so fast. And what is the duration of life of one individual man? Pile on the years to extreme old age, what is it? Is it anything more than a morning breeze? Granting that the day of judgement is far off, certainly your last day cannot be far off. Prepare for that; for such as you leave this life, such will you be returned to that life which is to be. Poor weak man, *yet a little while.*

§ 39. *Something standing over* (Ps. xxxvi).

Let the wicked man here find his delight in abundance of gold, in abundance of silver, in abundance of slaves, in abundance of palm-groves, roses, liquor and luxurious banquets. Is this the flower that delights thee? Why, if it could last for ever, would it not still be deplorable? What shall be thy delight? *Abundance of peace.* Peace shall be thy gold, peace thy silver, peace thy estates, thy God shall be thy peace. Thy God shall be thy whole. He shall be thy meat, that thou hunger not; thy drink, that thou thirst not; thy light, that thou be not blind; thy support, that thou faint not; he shall possess thee entirely, himself whole and entire.[1] Thou shalt have all, and he shall have all, because thou and he shall be one. *Guard, then, thine innocence*, for it is a precious thing; and think not that when this life is ended, man is ended, for there is *something standing over for the peaceful man.*

§ 40. *Christ's Passion* (Ps. xxxvi).

For a time thou labourest, for eternity thou shalt rest from labour; short is thy trouble, everlasting shall be thy happiness; a little while thou art in pain, without end shall be thy joy. But beginnest thou to sink in the midst of trouble? There is set before thee the example of the sufferings of Christ. However much thou sufferest, thou

[1] *Possidebit te totum integrum totus integer.*

wilt not come up to those insults, those scourges, that robe of ignominy, that crown of thorns, and finally that cross, that cross which is now removed from the list of human penalties. In ancient times criminals were executed by crucifixion; no one is crucified now. The cross is honoured and ended, ended as a punishment, remaining as a glory. From abodes of torment it has passed to the foreheads of Emperors. What does he keep in store for his faithful, who has given such honour to the instrument of his sufferings!

§ 41. *A place-hunter* (Ps. xxxvi).

A member of the Donatist party had come to us, accused and excommunicated by his own people, seeking here the [rank in the clergy] which he had lost there. But because he could not be received, except in the place in which he ought to have been put [*i.e.*, in lay communion]—for he had lost his standing with his own people before leaving them, and his leaving was evidently of necessity, not of choice—since then he could not get here what he sought, and he sought vain elation and false honour, not finding here what he lost there, he was lost himself. He groaned over his wound, and found no consolation, for there were horrible silent prickings in his conscience. We tried to comfort him by quoting the Word of God, but he was not of the number of the wise ants, who have gathered for themselves in summer their winter livelihood. In quiet times man ought to gather for himself the Word of God, and store it in the depths of his heart, as the ant hides away in her innermost store-rooms the produce of her summer labours. There is time to do this in summer, but winter comes, tribulation supervenes, and unless he finds within something to eat, the man must die of hunger. This man, then, had not gathered for himself the Word of God; winter came on, and he found not then what he sought; he could get no consolation from that quarter, and no consolation

any way from the word of God. Within himself he had nothing; outside he found not what he was in quest of; he was on fire with indignation and vexation; and the violent agitation of his mind went on so long in secret that at last it broke out into groans and noisy exclamations in the ears of the brethren, without his being aware that he was overheard. We saw, and God knows how vehemently we grieved over such mental agony, such excruciation, such hells, such torments. The end of the matter was that, brooking not a humble place, which might have been the saving of him, had he had sense, his behaviour led to his dismissal. Still, I do not despair of him, so long as he lives; for of no living man should we despair.

§ 42. *The riches of good will* (Ps. xxxvi).

*The sinner borroweth and will not pay*. How many things has the sinner received for which he will not pay! He has received being, he has received being a man, he has received the vast interval of being that lies between himself and a dumb animal; he has received in his body the distinct gifts of five senses, and the well-being itself of the body. These gifts, however, we have in common with beasts; he has further received a mind to understand, capable of truth, apt to discern right from wrong, to desire its Creator, to love and adhere to him. All these gifts the sinner has received; but by neglecting to lead a good life he neglects to make a due return. There he *borrows and will not pay, but the righteous hath mercy and lendeth;* he abounds in means. Even if he is poor he is rich; do you only look with pious eyes, and you will see his riches. You are apt to regard his empty purse, and not to regard his conscience full of God. He has no outward means, but he has charity within. Not finding anything outward to give, he gives good will, he gives advice, he gives personal aid; and if none of these means are within his power, he prays for his fellow-sufferer; and possibly is heard better

than another who bestows bread. The man whose heart is full of charity has always something to give. A good will cannot go idle.

§ 43. *Way of Christ, way of the Cross* (Ps. xxxvi).

When following the way of Christ do not promise yourself the prosperities of this life. He walked hard ways, but made large promises; follow. You will bear temporal hardship, but arrive at everlasting joys. The way to bear the labour is to consider the reward. So the labourer in the vineyard would faint, did he not keep his eye on what he was to receive. When you think of what you are to receive, all that you suffer will seem a cheap price to pay, and not worthy of being counted considering what you are to get for it. You will wonder at so much being given for such little toil. Surely, brethren, for everlasting rest everlasting labour should be gone through; to receive everlasting happiness, you ought to endure everlasting suffering; but if the labour you had to endure were everlasting, when would you arrive at everlasting happiness? Then necessarily your tribulation must be temporal, that at the end of that you may come to happiness without end. Still, brethren, a long tribulation might have been required for everlasting happiness—I mean, that since our happiness is never to have an end, our misery and labour and tribulation should be protracted for a long time. Supposing they were to last a thousand years, weigh a thousand years against eternity; how can you set any finite quantity in the balance against the infinite? Ten thousand years, a million years, a billion, that will have an end, that is not to be compared with eternity. Further, consider that God has not only willed your labour to be temporal, but also to be short. The whole life of man is made up of a few days. Even though times of good cheer were not intermingled with hard times—and the good cheer is more frequent and lasts longer than the hardship; and the

hardships are briefer and rarer that we may be able to bear them—even though, I say, man's whole life were to be spent in labours and hardships, in pains, in torments, in prison, in wounds, in hunger and thirst all days, all hours, all his life long even to old age, still man's whole life is but a few days; when that labour is over, there will come an everlasting kingdom, an endless happiness, there will come equality with the angels, there will come the inheritance of Christ, there will come Christ the coheir. What a huge reward we receive, and that for what small labour! The veterans who labour in military service, and live among wounds so many years, begin their military career from their youth and quit it old men. That they may enjoy a few quiet days in old age, when that same age begins to weigh down men no longer weighed down by war, how many hardships do they endure, what marches, what cold winters, what hot suns, what extremities, what wounds, what dangers! And in suffering all this they have nothing before them but those few quiet days of old age, to which they know not whether they shall ever arrive.—I was saying, if you wish for the way of Christ, and are a true Christian—and he is a true Christian who scorns not the way of Christ, but wishes to follow the way of Christ through his sufferings—seek not to go any other way but by the way that he has gone. It seems hard, but it is a safe way; the other way may have its delights, but is beset with robbers.[1]

[1] Though infinitely stronger than the temporal motive, the eternal never comes home to us in its infinity. And the temporal is the more intimately present.

> O, who can hold a fire in his hand
> By thinking of the frosty Caucasus?
> Or wallow naked in December snow
> By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
> *Richard II*, Act I, sc. 3.

The motive of reward is not the strongest motive of Christianity. Fear of punishment is stronger with most men. And strongest of all, to those who are sensible of it, is the present companionship of Christ.

§ 44. *Augustine's Apologia pro vita sua* (Ps. xxxvi).

Let them say against us whatever they will; let us love them even against their will [*sc.* the Donatists]. They see that they have no case, and so they turn their tongues against us, and begin saying of us many evil things which they know, and many also which they do not. What they know is our past life. *For we were once*, as the Apostle says, *foolish and unbelieving, and useless for any good work* (Tit. iii 3). The silly and insane victims of a perverse error, we do not deny it; all the more do we praise God who has forgiven us. Why, then, thou heretic, dost thou leave the case and attack the advocate? What am I? Am I the Catholic Church? Am I the inheritance of Christ spread through the nations? It is enough for me that I am in that inheritance. Thou blamest my past ill deeds. I am more severe than thou; what thou hast blamed, I have condemned. Would that thou wouldst copy my example, that thy error also some day should come to be a thing of the past. Those past ill deeds they know best who have lived in this city.[1] Here we lived a bad life, as I confess; and as much as I rejoice for the grace of God's forgiveness, so much for my past sins do I—what shall I say?—"grieve?" I should grieve if I were still such a sinner, but what shall I say? "Rejoice?" Neither can I say that, would that I had never been such. But whatever I have been, in the name of Christ it is past. As for what they now blame in me, they are talking about what they do not know. There are still things to blame in me, but it is too much to expect them to know them. Many things I go through in my thoughts, fighting against my evil suggestions, and having a long and almost continual conflict with the temptations of the enemy endeavouring to overthrow me. I sigh to God in my infirmity, but *it is a very little thing for me to be judged by you, but neither*

[1] Carthage. See *Confessions*, iii, 1 *sq.*

*do I judge myself* (1 Cor. iv 3). I know myself better than they, but God knows better than I do. They [the Donatists] say: We knew these people [Augustine and his friends] for bad men here [in Africa]: where were they baptised? If they know us well, they know that we took ship at one time; they know that we lived abroad [in Italy]; they know that we were one man when we went, and another man when we returned. We were not baptised here, but the church in which we were baptised [Milan] is known to the whole world. We have many brethren, and they know that we were baptised, and they themselves were baptised with us. No wonder [the Donatists] do not know that we were baptised in Christ oversea, because they have no Christ oversea. He has Christ oversea, who holds communion with the Universal Church oversea. How is he to know where I was baptised, whose communion hardly extends oversea?

§ 45. *One Christ, Head and Body* (Ps. xxxvii).

*There is no peace to my bones by reason of my sins.* It is a usual question, whose this utterance is. Some take it to be that of Christ, on account of some things here which we too shall acknowledge to be spoken of the Passion of Christ. But how should he who had no sin say, *by reason of my sins?* If we would understand, we must recognise the full and perfect Christ to be made up of Head and Body. When Christ speaks, sometimes he speaks in the person of the Head alone, which is our Saviour himself, born of the Virgin Mary; sometimes in the person of his Body, which is the holy Church diffused throughout the world. In that body we are, if our faith is sincere in him, and our hope fixed, and our charity on fire, and so we find ourselves saying in the Apostle's words that *we are members of his body* (Eph. v 30). If we say that these are not the words of Christ, neither will those other words be the words of Christ: *My God, my God, why hast*

*thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins* (Ps. xxi). And it would be very hard and contrary that that Psalm xxi should not belong to Christ, where his Passion is proclaimed as openly as it is recited in the Gospel. There we have: *They have divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they have cast lots* (verse 19, quoted John xix 24). And the Lord himself, hanging on the cross, uttered the first words of this psalm, *My God, my God*, etc., willing it to be understood that the whole psalm belonged to him. Hence, when he says *the words of my sins*, there is no doubt that that utterance belongs to Christ. How *sins*, except sins of his Body, which is the Church? The Body of Christ speaks, and the Head. Why do they speak as one? Because *the two shall be in one flesh* (Eph. v 31; Matt. xix 5). If *they are not two, but one flesh*, what wonder if there be one tongue, and the same words of Head and Body? So let us hear them as one; still, however, the Head is the Head, and the Body is the Body. They differ in dignity, because the Head saves, the Body is saved; the Head shows mercy, the Body bewails misery; the Head is for the purgation of sin, the Body for confession of the same. Why should he not say, *my sins*, who said, *I was hungry and you gave me to eat*, etc. (Matt. xxv 35-40); who said to Saul, *why persecutest thou me* (Acts ix 4)?

§ 46. *Scripture, the delight of the godly* (Ps. xxxviii).

There is a certain holy and good delight in books, in the word of God, in a parable of Scripture searched out and investigated, in the sweetness of discovery preceded by the labour of enquiry. Tell me not of the delight of having gold and silver, of banquets and luxury, of hunting and fishing parties, of playing and joking, of the trifles of the theatre, of the pursuit and gain of crumbling honours; tell me not that there is true delight in all these things, and no delight in books. Nay, the soul that has overleapt

these lower things, and found her delight in the sacred books, says in truth and says in serenity (Ps. cxviii): *The unrighteous have told me of their delights, but they are not like thy law, O Lord.*

§ 47. *Desire of heaven* (Ps. xxxviii).

*One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I will seek, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to see the delight of the Lord* (Ps. xxvi). There I shall be glad of a companion, and not fear an opponent; my friend will be there to contemplate with me; no enemy will be there to misrepresent me. This is what the psalmist desired, to be where he could say: " It is well, I wish for nothing further, all I see here I love, none do I see here that I fear." A good desire, a holy desire. Ye who have it already, rejoice along with us, and pray that we may persevere in having it, and not fall away amid scandals. We also make the same prayer for you. Not that we are worthy to pray for you, and you unworthy to pray for us. " Pray for us, brethren," says St Paul, " that we may see well what is to be seen, and say well what is to be said " (Col. iv 3). However, this desire, I know, is only in a few, nor do they well understand me who have not had a taste of what prompts me to speak. Still we speak to all—to them that have this yearning after heaven and to them that have it not; to them that have it, that they may join us in sighing after our home; to them that have it not, that they may shake off sloth, overleap lower and baser things, and arrive at the sweetness of the law of the Lord instead of remaining in the delights of the wicked.

§ 48. *The miser* (Ps. xxxviii).

*He heapeth up treasure, and knoweth not for whom he shall gather it.* Miser, you think me mad for saying this; you take it to be the talk of an old woman. Man of high counsel and high prudence that you are, you daily excogitate new

methods of money-making, by trade, by agriculture, perhaps also by eloquence, by profession of the law, by soldiering, by placing money out to interest. Shrewd man, you omit no means whereby coin may be piled on coin, and the receipt thereof may be carefully entered on your books.[1] You make a prey of another man; you are well on your guard against another man making a prey of you. You are afraid of having done to you what you do to others. But you have not such things done to you; you are a prudent man, you not only gather well, but you guard well. You know where to put your money, to whom to entrust it, so that nothing may be lost of what you have got together. I should like to cross-examine your conscience; I would fain question your prudence. I see you have so gathered, you have so stored, that you cannot possibly lose any portion of your store; tell me, for whom are you storing it? I am not going into other particulars with you; I am not dwelling on any harm that may befall your vain avarice; the one point I would discuss with you is that prompted by the reading of this psalm. To be sure, you gather, you heap up treasure. I do not say: "Take care lest in picking up you be picked up yourself; take care lest in acting the freebooter you be made booty; lest while you are playing the shark, and swallowing the small fry, some bigger shark come and swallow you.[2] You do not feel that you are in the sea; you do not notice how smaller fish are devoured by larger." I waive all that; I say nothing of the difficulties and dangers that wait on money-making; the sufferings, the hazard even of very life. I pass all that by. Be it so, you gather, and no one contradicts; you store, and no one takes away. Rouse your mind; bestir that prudence, on the strength of which you laugh at me, and think me a fool for saying such things to you; now tell me,

[1] *Cartigetur*. There are four other readings, but this, the more unusual, is the more likely to be genuine. *Cartigare*, a late Latin word, means to make an entry *in carta* (*charta*) of money received.

[2] *Ne forte cum vis esse praedo minoris, sis praeda majoris.*

" You are heaping up treasure; for whom will you gather it ?" I see what you have to say: you are on the point of saying, " I am laying up for my children." This is the voice of family affection; the excuse of iniquity. Yes, you are laying up for your children. You are passing away, and you are laying up for a child who is passing away too.

§ 49. *Treasure in heaven* (Ps. xxxviii).

You will say: " I reckon as lost what I do not see; I wish to see it here." In wishing to see it here, you will not see it here, and you will have nothing there. You have sundry treasures buried in the earth; when you walk abroad, you do not carry them with you. You have come to hear a sermon, to gather interior riches, and you are thinking of exterior goods; have you brought them here with you ? Why, even now you do not see them. You believe you have them at home, because you know that you put them there; do you know that you have not lost them ? How many have come home to their houses, and not found what they had put there ! Hereupon, I dare say, fear has smitten the hearts of the misers among my audience, and on occasion of my saying that many often have returned home and not found what they had put there, each has said in his heart: " Heaven forbid, Bishop; wish us good, pray for us, Heaven grant it may not happen, Heaven grant it be not so, I believe in God that what I have put in a safe place I shall find again." Do you believe in God, and not believe God himself ? " Oh, I believe in Christ, that what I have laid by will be safe, no one will go near it, no one will take it away." By believing in Christ you wish to have security that you shall lose nothing from your house. A better security would be to believe Christ, and put your wealth where he has advised you to put it. Have you no doubt about your slave, and are full of doubt about your Master ? No doubt about your house, and full of doubt about Heaven ?

" But," you say, " how am I to put anything in heaven ?" Christ replies: " I have given you advice; put it where I tell you; I do not want you to know how it reaches heaven. Put it in the hands of the poor; give it to the needy; what is it to you how it reaches ? Am I not able to carry to its destination what I receive ? *When you did it to one of my little ones, you did it to me* " (Matt. xxv 40). Suppose a friend of yours had sundry vats, or cisterns, or other such reservoirs for holding wine or oil, and you were looking for such convenience to store your produce, and he said to you, " I will keep it for you "; and suppose there were hidden pipes or conduits leading to those reservoirs, invisible means of passage for what was visibly poured into them; and he said to you, " Pour in what you have here "; and you saw that that was not the place where you thought to put your precious liquor, and were afraid to pour it in there; would not he who knew the secret construction of the place say: " Don't be afraid to pour it, it goes from here there; you don't see the way it passes, but believe me who have built the place "?[1] He by whom all things were made has constructed mansions for all of us; thither he wishes our possessions to go in advance, that we may not lose them on earth. When you have kept things on earth, tell me for whose benefit you will gather them together. You have sons; reckon one more son, and give something also to Christ.[2]

§ 50. *Madness of the arena* (Ps. xxxix).

An unsound mind cries out falsehoods, sanity is truthful. In what you see and take for good, you are mistaken. You are not of sound mind; the fever-fit has driven you into frenzy; what you love is no reality. You praise your

[1] Some later copyist, or St Augustine's amanuensis, or the bishop himself, has left to the translator the task of reconstructing this sentence.

[2] But first attend to Jas. v 4, and make restitution, if due, in that quarter.

favourite charioteer, you cry out to your charioteer, you are mad over that charioteer. It is vanity, insanity, lying. "No, it is not," you say, "there is nothing better, nothing more interesting." What am I to do with this fever patient? If there is any compassion in you, pray for such people. Often a doctor turns in despair to the members of a family who stand round him in tears, hanging on his lips to hear the sentence on the sick man in danger; the doctor stands hesitating; he sees no good that he can promise, he fears to express an unfavourable opinion, lest he frighten the family; he hits upon this well-guarded utterance: "The good God can do all things, pray for him." How can I get hold of any of these madmen? Who will listen to me? Which of them will not think us wretched fools? Because we do not share their madness, they reckon that we have lost a great and varied assortment of pleasures over which they are mad,[1] and do not see that they are lies. I ask such a sick man to take something; he makes ready his fists, and would fain make a dead set on his doctor. Well, even if he strikes, let him be loved; if he hurts you, don't let him be abandoned; there is time for him to return to his right mind and render thanks. Certainly there are such cases of return, and we rejoice over them. If we rejoice over them, let us not despair of others. Let us pray for them, brethren; the number of saints grows out of what was the number of the wicked.

§ 51. *Walking the waters* (Ps. xxxix).

Perhaps he will say to us, who has begun walking the narrow way: "I cannot go on walking without some sightseeing." What are we to do, brethren? Shall we leave him without any sightseeing? He will die, he will not persevere, he will not follow us. What are we to do

[1] Exactly what someone said to a young man, a friend of mine, who avowed that in a certain direction he had never sinned. How impenitent such sinners are!

then? Let us give him sights for sights. And what sights are we in a position to afford to the Christian man, whom we wish to call off from those sights in the amphitheatre? Hear what follows: *Many are thy wonderful works which thou hast made, O Lord God.* He used to regard the wonderful works of men; let him fix his eyes on the wonderful works of God. He used to praise a charioteer for driving four horses, running without a hitch. Can it be that the Lord does not work spiritual wonders of that sort? Let him harness and drive luxury, drive cowardice, drive injustice, drive imprudence.[1] The impulses that, carried too far, make these things into vices, let him guide that impulse, subject it to himself, hold the reins, and not be run away with; lead whither he would, and not be dragged whither he would not. He praised a charioteer, a charioteer shall be praised; he cried out for the charioteer to be clothed with a robe, he shall be clad in immortality. These are the shows, these the spectacles that God exhibits. God cries from heaven: "I am looking on at you; wrestle, I will help; overcome, I will crown." A man has learnt with much endeavour to walk on a tight-rope; and as he hangs thence, your attention hangs on him. See that divine exhibition of greater sights. This man has learnt to walk on a tight-rope; has he succeeded in walking on the sea? Forget your theatre, attend to our Peter, no rope-walker, but, if I may say so, a sea-walker (Matt. xiv 29). Walk you also, not on those waters whereon Peter with mystic meaning walked, but on others. For this world is a sea; it has its noxious bitterness, it has waves of tribulations, tempests of temptations; it has men, like fish, devouring one another; here walk, here tread. You wish to be a sightseer, be a sight yourself; *for we are made a spectacle to this world, to angels and to men* (1 Cor. iv 9). You will not step on the sea, you will not tread it, otherwise than by

[1] That is, practise the four cardinal virtues, temperance, fortitude, justice, prudence.

his order who first walked on the sea. These wonders has the Lord wrought, look on him; let faith be your spectator's eye. And do you work the like wonders; because though winds beat, and waves roar, and human frailty has led you to some doubt of your salvation, you have the resource of crying out, *Master, I perish.* He does not let you perish, who bade you walk.

§ 52. *Not without sacrifice* (Ps. xxxix).

God would have no more of those holocausts of rams, calves, goats and other victims. Why would he not have them? Why at first would he have them? Because they were all, as it were, words of promise; and words of promise are no longer uttered when that which they promise has come. You are a promiser till you give; once you have given, you change your word, and say no longer "I will give," but "I have given." Those sacrifices then, as being words of promise, are removed. What is it that is given in fulfilment? The Body that you know; that you do not all know;[1] and would that you who know it, all knew it otherwise than unto judgement (1 Cor. xi 29). *Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not.* What, then, are we left now at this time without sacrifice? Heaven forbid. *But a body thou hast made perfect for me.*[2] Thou wouldst have those other sacrifices, before thou didst make this perfect. The perfect fulfilment of the promises has taken away the words of promising. In this Body we are, of this Body we are partakers. We know what we receive, and you who do not know shall know; and when you do know, may it be that you receive not unto judgement. The Body is made perfect for us, be we made perfect in the Body.

[1] Spoken to the catechumens, for whom was still kept up "the discipline of the secret."

[2] St Augustine follows the Septuagint reading, as also does St Paul (Heb. x 5).

§ 53. *Christ needy and poor* (Ps. xl).

*Blessed is he that hath understanding on the needy and poor: in the evil day God will deliver him.* The evil day will come, whether you will or no; the day of judgement will be at hand, an evil day, if you have not had understanding on the needy and poor. What you refuse to believe now, shall then in the end be manifest. But you shall not escape when it is manifest, because you do not believe now when it is hidden. You are invited to believe what you do not see, lest you be put to confusion when you do see. Have understanding, then, on the needy and poor, that is, on Christ; understand hidden riches in him whom you see poor, for *in him are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col. ii 3). That which was human in himself he has raised from death, and altered to a better state, and lifted up to heaven. But he who is God, who has willed to have one person in man and with man, could neither decrease nor increase, nor die nor rise again.[1] He died in the infirmity of man, but God does not die.[2] Wonder not that the Word of God does not die, as neither does the soul die in a martyr. If then, when martyrs die, the martyrs' souls die not, how should the Word die when Christ died? But as we rightly say, the man is dead, though his soul dies not, so we rightly say, Christ died, though his Divinity does not die. How came he to die? Because he was *needy and poor*. Let not his death blind you, and turn you away from beholding his Divinity. Regard also the multitude of poor, needy, hungry and thirsty, travellers, naked, sick, in prison; have understanding also on such and such a poor man, because if you have understanding on such, you have understanding on him who said, *I was hungry, thirsty, naked, a traveller, sick, in prison* (Matt. xxv 35). So the Lord will deliver you in the evil day.

[1] Understand *as he is God.* [2] Understand again *as God.*

§ 54. *Blessedness on earth* (Ps. xl).

The Apostle says: *Piety hath the promise of the life that now is and of the life that is to be* (1 Tim. iv 8), to the end that they who have understanding on the needy and poor should not fancy that they are to be received into heaven, but neglected on earth; have no life but of an eternity to come; but as for the present life, think that God does not care what happens to his faithful and holy ones. The psalm says, *and make him blessed on earth.* Lift up, then, your eyes with Christian faith to these promises; God does not abandon you on earth, and promise you something in heaven. There are many bad Christians given to superstitious practices; and when they are taken to task, their answer is, " We are Christians for life everlasting, but these things are necessary for this time; this temporal life is not Christ's care."[1] It comes to this, in short, according to them, that God is to be worshipped for life everlasting, but the devil for this present life. Christ himself gives the answer: *Ye cannot serve two masters* (Matt. vi 24). So you are for worshipping one for your expectations in heaven, and worshipping the other for your expectations on earth; how much better would you do to worship One who has made heaven and earth ! Is he who has provided for the earth's existence likely to neglect his image on earth ? Therefore, though he gives life everlasting to the man that hath intelligence for the needy and the poor, may he also *make him blessed on earth.*

§ 55. *Christ's commands not impossible* (Ps. xl).

No longer able to persuade men that there is nothing in Christianity, the devil now tries to deceive them by

[1] Savages are given to devil-worship and sorcery, on the same principle. They do believe in a supreme Spirit, but think him too great to attend to their sublunary wants. Indeed, it is a common notion everywhere, that if you are looking for good in this life, you want to go to someone else than God, and beyond the bounds of his law, to get it.

praising Christ. What was his language before? "Whom do you worship? A dead Jew, a crucified, a man of no standing, who could not keep off death from himself." But now that he sees mankind running in Christ's name, temples overthrown, idols broken, sacrificial fires extinct in the name of the Crucified, he clothes himself in the praises of Christ and starts another method of deterring from the faith. "A grand law is the Christian law, a mighty law, divine and ineffable, but who fulfils it?" In the name of our Saviour, *trample on the lion and the dragon* (Ps. xc). The lion roared by open fault-finding, the dragon lies in wait with crafty praise. Let not men say, "Who fulfils this law?" If they presume on their own strength, they will not fulfil it. All the faithful live in the name of Christ, each according to his station fulfilling the precepts of Christ, married and unmarried living as God grants them to live, but not presuming on their own strength. Ask me not, "Who fulfils it?" He fulfils it in me, who has come rich to the poor, full to the empty.[1]

§ 56. *Sweets and bitters of life* (Ps. xl).

Every weak soul in this life seeks for something earthly to rest on, because it is hard to bear continually the strain of fixing the mind on God; accordingly, the soul seeks for some support and repose and couch of ease on earth, as are the things that even the innocent love. No need here to speak of the disorderly affections of the wicked; let us set all that aside, and come to the innocent man. He sets up his rest in his house, in his household of servants, in his wife and children, in his little farm, in the field that he has sown with his own hands, in something of a little

[1] These words of St Augustine are valuable in view of the *Augustinus* of Jansenius, who gave it out as Augustinian doctrine that sundry of God's precepts are impossible of human observance, and that grace is not given to man to observe them—the first Jansenist proposition to draw down the condemnation of the Church.

building that he has put up by his own industry; the innocent set up their rest in these things. Nevertheless, God, wishing us to have no love but for life everlasting, mixes bitternesses even with these innocent delights. Let not the good man complain of this. He is being taught to love the better things by the bitterness of the lower, that, as a wayfarer travelling home, he may not come to love his hostelry for his house.

§ 57. *Where is thy God?* (Ps. xli).

What shall I do to find my God? I will consider the earth; the earth is made. Great is the beauty of the regions of earth, but it has a Maker. Great are the wonders of fecundity and generation, but they all have a Creator. I am shown the magnitude of the encompassing sea; I am amazed, I wonder, I look for the Maker thereof. I look up to the sky and to the beauty of the stars; I admire the brightness of the sun, bringing to birth the day; the moon, soothing the darkness of night; these are wonderful sights, amazing even, for they are not earthly, but heavenly; but even there my thirst is not yet appeased: I wonder, I praise, but I seek him who made these things; I thirst, I return to myself and examine who I am myself, conducting this enquiry: I find I have a body and soul, one for me to rule, one for me to be ruled by; a body to serve, a soul to command. I perceive that my soul is a better being than my body, and that the very agent who conducts this enquiry is not my body but my soul. And yet I am aware that all these things that I have been observing, I have observed through the body. I was praising the stars, I knew them by my eyes. I was praising the sea, I knew that by my eyes. Sky, stars, sun and moon I was praising, I knew them by my eyes. The eyes are members of the body of flesh, they are the windows of the mind; within is the intelligence who sees through them; when he is absent-minded by some distracting thought, the eyes are

open in vain. My God, who made these things that I see with my eyes, is not to be sought out by these eyes. But perhaps God is some such being as the soul herself? No, the object in quest is some unchangeable truth, some being that subsists without defect. Not such is the soul herself, open to defect and improvement, to knowledge and ignorance, remembering, forgetting, now willing, now unwilling. Such changeableness is not incident to God. Seeking therefore, my God in visible and corporeal things, and not finding him; seeking his substance in myself, as though he were some such being as I myself am, and not finding him there either; I feel that my God must be something above my soul. Yes, I seek my God in every body, earthly and heavenly, and find him not; I seek his substance in my soul, and find it not there; still longing to *understand and discern the invisible things of God by the things that are made* (Rom. i 20), I have poured out my soul above myself, and now there remains nothing for me to touch but my God. There is the house of my God, above my soul; there he dwells, thence he looks out on me, thence he has created me, thence he governs me, thence he has care of me, thence he stirs me, thence he calls me, thence he directs me, thence he guides me, thence he brings me home.

§ 58. *Harp and lyre* (*psalterium et cithara*).

A. (Ps. lxxx). I remember that we have sometimes intimated to Your Charity the difference between the harp and the lyre. Let the studious, who remember, recognise it; let those who have either not heard, or who have failed to remember, learn it. The difference of these two musical instruments is this, that the harp has uppermost that box of wood (*concavum illud lignum*) whence the strings are fastened; the strings are struck from below, that they may sound from above. But in the lyre this box of wood is below; as though the harp sounded from heaven, but the lyre from earth.

B. (Ps. lvi). The harp is an instrument that is carried in the hands of the musician who plays it, and has its strings stretched; but that wooden box which hangs free and acts as a sounding-board (*pendet et tactum resonat*), the harp has on its upper end, but the lyre has the same wooden, resonant box below. Thus in the harp the strings catch their sonorousness from above, but in the lyre from below. This is the difference between harp and lyre. What, then, is the figurative meaning of these instruments? The Lord by his flesh wrought two sorts of works, miracles and sufferings; the miracles were from above, the sufferings were from below. The miracles that he wrought were divine, but he wrought them through his Body, through his Flesh. That Flesh, then, working divine works, is the harp; that Flesh, undergoing human sufferings, is the lyre. Let the harp sound, let the blind be enlightened, let the deaf hear, let the palsied be braced up, let the lame walk, let the sick get up, let the dead arise; that is the sound of the harp. Let the lyre also sound, let him hunger, thirst, sleep, be seized, scourged, mocked, crucified, bruised. When, then, you perceive in that Flesh some notes that have sounded from above, others from below, it is one Flesh that has arisen, and in that one Flesh we recognise both harp and lyre.

C. (Ps. xlii). These two musical instruments, the harp and the lyre, vary from one another, and the variation is noteworthy and a thing to remember. They are both of them carried and touched by the hands, and signify certain corporal works of ours. They are both good, if one knows how to play the one and the other. But because the harp has the shell (*testudinem*) above the strings—I mean by *shell* that sounding-board and box of wood to which the strings are attached, and to which they owe their resonance—while the lyre has that same box and sonorous piece of wood below the strings; therefore we must draw a distinction between our works, some of them being executed on

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the harp, others on the lyre, though both of them are pleasing to God and melodious in his ears. When, then, we act and do not suffer, in fulfilling God's orders and obeying his commands, that is the harp. So the angels act, but do not suffer. But when we suffer something in the way of tribulations, temptations and scandals on this earth, because we suffer only by reason of the inferior and mortal part of our being, and because we suffer much from people who are not from above, that is the lyre. The sweet sound comes from below; we suffer and sing, we sing and play our lyre. When the Apostle said that he preached the Gospel all the world over, a Gospel which he had received not through man, but through Jesus Christ (Gal. i 12), the chords sounded from above. But when he said, *we glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience approval, and approval hope* (Rom. v 3, 4), the lyre sounded from below, but still sweetly, for all patience is sweet to God. But if you fall away in tribulation, you have broken your lyre.

D. (Ps. xxxii). They remember who were present on a former occasion, when we laid down in words as best we could, and tried to bring it within the understanding of all, what is the difference between a harp (*psalterium*) and a lyre (*cithara*). And now not unseasonably we repeat ourselves, to the end that in that variety of musical instruments we may find a diversity of human acts thereby signified, and to be worked out in our life. Now look at that box, that drum-like hanging shell (*testudinem*), the wood on which the strings rest, that they may resound to the touch—I do not mean the bow (*plectrum*) wherewith they are struck, but that wooden box (*lignum illud concavum*) over which they are stretched, on which they may be said to lean, that thereby they may receive an impulse, when struck, and catching sound from that hollow they may be rendered more resonant; well, the lyre has this wooden box below, the harp above. That is the difference. Now

we are bidden to *confess on the lyre, and play on the harp of ten strings* (Ps. xxxii). He does not say "on a lyre of ten strings," not in this psalm, nor, if I am not mistaken, anywhere. Let our readers consider the matter better at their leisure; but, so far as I seem to remember, we find in many places a harp (*psalterium*) of ten strings; a lyre (*cithara*) of ten strings nowhere occurs as having come in my reading. Remember that the lyre has the sounding-board below, the harp above. From our lower life, that is, our earthly life, we have prosperity and adversity, and we praise God in both, that *his praise may be ever in our mouth* (Ps. xxxiii). There is an earthly prosperity and an earthly adversity; to play our lyre, we must praise God for both. What is earthly prosperity? When we are sound of body, and have abundant means of subsistence; when *God makes his sun rise on good and bad, and rains upon righteous and unrighteous* (Matt. v 45). All these things make for our earthly life. Whoever does not praise God for them, is ungrateful. Surely they do not cease to be of God because they are of this earth. Or is any other than God to be supposed to give them because they are given even to bad men? Manifold is the mercy of God, patient, long-suffering. He shows all the more by this what he has in store for the good, seeing how much he gives even to bad men. Then there are adversities, coming on the lower side, from the frailty of human nature, in the shape of pains, sicknesses, hardships, tribulations, temptations. Everywhere let the player on the lyre praise God. Let him not mind their being on the lower side, but consider that they must be ruled and managed by that Wisdom which *reacheth from end to end in might, and disposeth all things in sweetness* (Wisd. viii 1). He does not rule the heavens and neglect the earth. If, then, earthly good abound in thy hand, thank the giver; if it be wanting, still play thy lyre in all assurance, touch the strings in thy heart, and with sounding-board resonant at the foot of the instrument sing to the

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accompaniment of thy lyre: *the Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*[1]

§ 59. *Punishment of sin* (Ps. xliv).

Sin must be punished; if it were not a thing to punish, it would not even be sin. Anticipate God; if thou dost not wish him to punish, do thou punish thyself. To that purpose he still spares, differs, holds his hand. Would he cry out so much that he will strike, if he wished to strike? He holds back his hand from thy sins; do thou hold not back thine. Turn thyself to punish thy sins, because sins cannot go unpunished. Punishment there must be, either from thyself or from him; do thou acknowledge, that he may ignore and forgive. *Turn away thy face from my sins* (Ps. l). He does not say *from me*. And in another place he says openly, *turn not away thy face from me* (Ps. xxvi). Do thou never turn thy face away from thy sins, if thou wishest God to turn his face away from them. And so in the same psalm: *I know mine iniquity, and my sin is always before me*. He wishes that not to be before God, which he wishes to be before himself.

[1] This reads like a homily of St John Chrysostom, who is perpetually inculcating thanksgiving to God for whatever happens. The mystical rendering of *harp* and *lyre* is not quite the same in all these four passages. Nor are we quite sure of St Augustine's instruments. The *cithara* answers pretty accurately to the lyre, if we remember that the original lyre of the legend was a tortoise-shell, with the strings stretched across the mouth, the shell below serving for sounding-board. In course of time, two horn-like uprights were fixed in the bowl; they were connected by a horizontal bar, called the *bridge* of the lyre, to which strings were attached, passing vertically down and attached below to the bowl, or sounding-board. There were seven of these strings. The *psalterium* is more difficult to identify. If it were like our harp, a triangular instrument, it is wonderful that St Augustine, with his love of symbolism, should nowhere discern in the triangular frame of the *psalterium* a figure of the Blessed Trinity. But he never speaks of the *psalterium* as triangular. A more positive divergence between *psalterium* and harp is the position of the sounding-board, *above* the strings, as St Augustine is continually

§ 59A. *Conscience* (Ps. xlv).

There are many tribulations, and in every tribulation we must fly to God. Whether it be tribulation in a matter of property, or of health, or of the peril of dear ones, or of the means of support, in any case there should be no other refuge to a Christian man than his Saviour and his God, and in that refuge he finds strength, he will not be his own strength. But of all tribulations of the human soul there is no greater tribulation than the consciousness of guilt. If there be no wound there, if the part of man that we call conscience is sound, wherever else one finds tribulations, one flies thither and then finds God. But if there be no rest there for the abundance of iniquity, since God is not there, what is man to do, whither is he to fly, when tribulation comes on? He will fly from the country to the town, from the market-place to his own house, from his house to his own room, and still tribulation follows him. From his room he has no place to fly except to his own interior couch. But if there is tumult there, the smoke of iniquity, the flame of crime, he cannot find refuge even there, he is driven thence, and driven thence he is driven out of himself. Where is he to go to escape himself? Whithersoever he drags himself in that condition, he is his own torment. These are the tribulations that find a man out exceedingly; there are none more bitter, none more bitter inasmuch as there are none that go deeper. When a load of timber is examined by the carpenters, the timbers sometimes show on the surface as though they were frayed and decaying; but the carpenter looks at the inner core of the wood, and if he finds that sound, he promises that it shall last in the building; nor will he be much concerned about the frayed surface, when the in-

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insisting, in the *psalterium*, but in the modern harp, *below*. Still, we may render *psalterium* by *harp*, for want of a more exact equivalent.

terior of the wood rings true. Now in man there is nothing more inward than his conscience; what, then, shall it profit him if his exterior be sound and heart and conscience rotting? These tribulations of conscience come home, and are very violent; nevertheless, even in these the Lord is our helper and forgives sins.

§ 60. *Thy holy Mount* (Ps. xlvii).

*Great is the Lord and exceedingly to be praised.* But do unbelievers praise the Lord? Or, again, do they who believe and lead bad lives praise the Lord, they by whose doing *the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles* (Isa. lxii 5)? Even if they were to praise, is their praise acceptable, it being written, *praise is not comely in the mouth of a sinner* (Ecclus. xv 9)? *Who shall ascend to the mountain of the Lord? The innocent of hands and clean of heart* (Ps. xxiii). In such, *the Lord is great and exceedingly to be praised, in the city of our God, on his holy mount.* This is *the city on the hill that cannot be hid*, the *light not hidden under a bushel* (Matt. v 14, 15), known to all, celebrated among all. What, then, is this mountain, brethren, a mountain with great care to be sought, with great solicitude to be determined, with labour to be occupied and ascended? If it is anywhere on earth, what shall we do? Are we to go on pilgrimage away from our own land to arrive at this mountain? Rather, we are then on pilgrimage if we are not on the mountain. There is our native city, if we are members of the King who is head of that city. Where, then, is that mountain? If it is planted in any country, we must labour, as I said, to arrive at it. But why trouble thyself? Oh, that thou mayest not be too lazy to ascend the mountain, seeing the mountain has not been slow to come to thee as thou didst sleep! There was a certain corner-stone, despised, on which the Jews stumbled, cut from a certain mountain without hands (Dan. ii 34; Rom. ix 32), that is, coming from the kingdom of the Jews

without hands, because no human operation came near Mary, of whom was born Christ. But if that stone, on which the Jews stumbled, had remained where it was, you would have had no means of ascending the mountain. How, then, did it come about? Why, that stone grew and became a great mountain (Dan. ii 15), so great as to fill the whole face of the earth; and filling the whole face of the earth, it has come to us. Why, then, seek the mountain as though it were far away, instead of ascending it here as it lies before us?

§ 61. *Fewness of God's friends* (Ps. xlvii).

Here now the thought occurs to every thinking man: this people who receive the mercy of God, what is their number? How few they are! They are hard to find; will God be content with these, and lose such a multitude? Such is the speech of men who promise themselves what they have not heard God promising. "And really, if we lead evil lives, and enjoy the good things of this world, and serve our lusts, is God going to destroy us for that? How few there are who seem to observe the commandments of God! hardly one or two are to be found, certainly very few; is God going to deliver them alone, and damn the rest of us? Heaven forbid; when he comes and sees such a multitude on his left hand, he will have mercy and grant pardon." Exactly what the serpent promised the first man. God had threatened death if he tasted; but the serpent: "No, no, you shall not die." They believed the serpent; they found that what God threatened was true, and what the devil had promised, false. So it is now, brethren; put the Church before your eyes for a figure of paradise; the serpent does not cease to suggest what he suggested then. But the fall of the first man ought to serve us as an experience of caution, not to imitate his sin. He fell that we may rise. Let us meet such suggestions with Job's reply (Job ii 10). Job was

tempted by his wife, as Adam by Eve; and Job overcame on his dunghill, whereas Adam was overcome in paradise. Therefore let us not listen to such language, nor reckon that the good are few. They are many, but are hidden among more of the other sort, so that the good do not appear, as the grains do not appear on the threshing-floor. At sight of a threshing-floor, one might think that there was nothing but chaff there. Given a man without experience, he thinks that it is all in vain that the oxen are put in to tread, and that men there sweat in threshing out the chaff with the flail; but there all the while the heap of grain lies, waiting to be cleansed by the winnowing-fan. Then will come out the abundance of corn that was hidden by the abundance of chaff. And do you now wish to find the good? Be good yourself, and you will find them. *Let mount Sion rejoice, and the children of Juda be glad, for thy judgements, O Lord.* O mount Sion, O children of Juda, you labour now among cockle, among chaff, among thorns; but rejoice for the judgements of God. God errs not in judging. Live separate, though you were born in company. Not in vain has the cry gone out from your mouth and heart, *destroy not my soul with the wicked, nor my life with men of blood* (Ps. xxv). That great Craftmaster, who *carries his winnowing-fan in his hand* (Matt. iii 12), will so winnow his corn that not one grain of wheat shall fall into the heap of chaff waiting to be burned, nor one ear of chaff pass over to the heap to be stored in the barn.

§ 62. *Not what I will but what thou* (Ps. xlvii).

All the divine utterances are wholesome to those who understand them well, but dangerous to those who would wrench them to the perversity of their own heart rather than adjust and correct their heart by their right standard. This is a great and usual perversity among men, that, whereas they ought to live according to the will of God, they want God to live according to their will; and refusing

themselves to be corrected, they wish him to be bent awry, counting right not what he wills, but what they will. We commonly hear men complaining against God that it is well with the wicked in this life, while the good are in distress, as though he was astray in his judgement and did not know what he was doing; or had altogether turned his eyes away from human affairs, or did not want his serenity disturbed by attending to such things, as though it were a labour for God to see things or correct them. Such are the complaints of men whose object in worshipping God is to have a good time here.

§ 63. *Dives and Lazarus* (Ps. xlviii).

The man who was clad in purple and fine linen feasted sumptuously every day, and in his swollen pride[1] contemned the ulcerous wretch whose ulcers the dogs licked, lying before his gate, desiring the crumbs that fell from his table. What did those riches profit him? The two changed places: the one was carried away from the rich man's door to the bosom of Abraham, the other from his splendid feasting was sent into fire; the one was now resting, the other burning; the one was in life everlasting, an end to his troubles, the other was in trouble everlasting, an end to his life. The one was longing for a drop of water from the other's finger, as the other had longed for crumbs from the rich man's table; but the labour of the one was ended, and the life of the other was ended; the labour of the latter was to go on for ever, and the life of the former was to go on for ever. Here is a man thinking of constructing for himself a marble mortuary, as though Dives dwelt in his. Had he dwelt there, he would not be burning in hell. The thing to think of is where the wicked man's spirit dwells, not where his body is laid. Posterity will take bread and wine to their ancestors' tombs, and there call upon the names of the dead. Fancy with what em-

[1] *Superbus et tumidus.* St Ignatius's *crecida soberbia.*

phasis Dives's name was called upon, when men drank to excess in his mortuary, and not one drop went down upon his burning tongue! Such feasters serve their own belly, not the spirits of their ancestors. Nothing reaches the spirits of the dead but the works they have done by themselves when alive.[1]

§ 64. *Quasi, or Methought* (Ps. xlviii).

*Quasi sad, but always rejoicing* (2 Cor. vi 10). Why has our sadness a *quasi* prefixed to it? Because it will pass away like a dream. Your Charity knows that one telling his dream puts in a *quasi* (methought).[2] "Methought I was sitting, methought I was talking, methought I was driving, methought I was riding." It is all "methought," because, when he wakes, he finds not what he saw. "Methought (*quasi*) I had found a treasure," says the beggar-man. If it were not a "methought," a *quasi*, he would not be a beggar-man; but because it was a *quasi* treasure, he is a beggar-man still. And so now in their case who open their eyes to worldly joys, and shut their heart, their *quasi* passes away, and their truth and stern reality comes. Their *quasi* is the happiness of this world, their truth is their punishment; whereas our *quasi* is sadness, but our joy is no *quasi*. And so the Apostle's having nothing was a *quasi*; but his *possessing all things* was a reality. How a reality? Because he clove to the Creator of all.

§ 65. *An average man*[3] (Ps. xlviii).

You are likely to see an evil man living the life of a prosperous gentleman, and perchance your feet will totter,

[1] Nothing, that is, of the meat and drink which African custom carried to their tombs (*Confessions*, vi 2). For the rest, "we must not omit those supplications for the spirits of the dead, which the Church has undertaken to make for all who die in Christian and Catholic society" (Augustinus, *De cura pro mortuis*, cap. 4).

[2] "Methought that I had broken from the Tower . . . methought that Gloucester stumbled," etc. (Clarence's dream in *Richard III*).

[3] See Mgr. Benson's book with this title.

and you will say in your heart, " O God, I know this man's doings and crimes, and there he is, a prosperous, domineering bully; his head aches not, nothing in his house grows less;" and your heart may say, " Poor me, I have believed without grounds, God has no regard for human affairs." God then rouses us with the words, *fear not when a man is become rich.* What was there to fear in that? You were afraid you were believing without grounds, that perhaps you had lost the labour of your faith and the hope of your conversion. Perhaps there once came in your way an opportunity of fraudulent gain, and if you took it, there was an opening for you to become a rich man, and be above labouring for your bread; but, in view of God's threats, you abstained from the fraud and rejected the gain, and now you see another who has made a fraudulent gain, and is none the worse for it, and you are afraid of being a good man. Will you have no eyes but for the present? It is the future that he has promised you, who has risen again; peace on this earth, and rest in this life, he has not promised. Every man seeks rest; he seeks a good thing, but does not seek it in the proper quarter. There is no peace in this life; what we seek on earth is promised us in heaven.[1]

§ 66. *A diet of sin* (Ps. xlviii).

" As long as he lived, he did well for himself." This is what all men say, but their saying is false. The felicitation is to the mind of him that pronounces it, but not to the standard of truth. What do you say? Because he has eaten and drunk well, done as he liked and feasted sumptuously, therefore he has done well for himself? I say, he has done ill for himself. It is not I, but Christ that says it. That rich man (Luke xvi) feasted sumptuously every day, and thought he was doing well for himself, but when he began to burn in hell, that was found to be

[1] Still, there must be some meaning in the Christmas promise, *in terra pax.*

ill which was thought to be well done. What he had eaten on earth, he digested in hell—I mean, brethren, the iniquity on which he feasted. With the mouth of his flesh he ate costly dainties, with the mouth of his heart he devoured iniquity. His eating had been done in time, his bad digestion set in to last eternally. Is there such a thing, then, as devouring iniquity? Listen to the Scripture: *As a sour grape is vexation to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so is iniquity to them that practise it* (Prov. x 26). He who devours, that is, willingly takes up iniquity, cannot make his food of righteousness. Righteousness is bread; and as when a man eats sour grapes, his teeth are set on edge, and he is indisposed to eat bread—all that he can do is to praise what he sees, being unable to eat it—so he who has practised iniquity, and fed his heart on sins, comes to be unable to eat bread; he praises the word of God, and does it not. If we would make our food of righteousness, let us refrain from iniquity, and thereupon arises not only a delight in praising righteousness, but also a facility in making the same our food.

§ 67. *Dread of fire* (Ps. xlix).

If there were no fire to come on the day of judgement, and all that threatened sinners was separation from the face of God, yet even so—in the enjoyment of all conceivable abundance of delights, and everlasting impunity for sin—even so, I say, they ought to bewail their lot in not seeing him by whom they were created, and being cut off from the sweetness of his ineffable countenance.[1] But what am I to say, or to whom should I say it? This

[1] "Suppose no God, and man immortal; suppose at the judgement God, without positive infliction, merely left a man to himself, he would be his own eternal torment" (Newman, *Sermon Notes*, pp. 27-29). The loss of God, however disregarded in this world, is no longer so disregardable in the next; it is essentially the chief torment of hell, and in some mysterious way may be at the back even of hell-fire. See my *Everlasting Punishment*, Catholic Truth Society.

is a punishment for lovers, not for scorners. They who in any measure have begun to feel the sweetness of wisdom and truth know what I say, what a punishment it is merely to be banished from the face of God. As for those who have never tasted that sweetness, if they do not yet desire the face of God, let them fear at least the fire. Let them be terrified by punishments, who are not invited by rewards. What God promises is a poor thing in your eyes; tremble anyhow at what he threatens. I tell you, there will come the sweetness of his presence; you are not moved, you are not roused, you do not sigh, you do not desire, you hug your sins and the delights of your flesh, you are laying by you loads of straw, the fire will come—not such a fire as burns on your hearth; and yet, if you were forced to put your hand into that, you would be ready to comply with any demand of the man who threatened that. By God's threats, threats of everlasting fire, you are debarred from doing evil, and invited to do good. Why are you slow to comply, if not because you do not believe?

§ 68. *What God wants, love* (Ps. xlix).

Let us see what God wants of man—what tribute God, our Emperor and King,[1] imposes upon us, seeing that he has wished to be our King, and wished us to be his province. Let us hear his impositions. Let not the poor tremble under the imposition of God; what God imposes as a tribute to be given him, he himself first gives who imposes the tribute; do you only be devout and loyal. God does not exact what he has not given; and that which he exacts, he has given to all.[2] What does he exact? Let us hear. *I will not reproach thee over thy sacrifices.* I will not say to thee: Why dost thou not slay me a fat bull? why hast thou not picked out the best goat in thy

[1] The Roman Emperor was styled *βασιλεύς* (king) in the provinces.

[2] A notable saying—for St Augustine.

herd? why does that ram range among thy sheep instead of being laid on my altar? I will not say: Look at thy fields, or thy farmyard,[1] seeking for something to give me. Yet the psalmist speaks of some holocaust that God will accept. A holocaust is something *wholly consumed* in the fire. Let the soul be aglow with charity, let the same charity seize the members to its own purpose, not allow them to serve lust, that he may be all on fire with divine love, who wishes to offer to God a holocaust. Of such may God say, *thy holocausts are in my sight everlastingly*.

§ 69. *God's knowledge antecedent to creation* (Ps. xlix).

Do not expect me, brethren, to explain to you how God knows. This alone I say, he does not know as an angel knows; but how he does know, I cannot say, because I cannot know. One thing alone I know, that before the birds of the air were, God knew what he was going to create. Things were with him in some ineffable way before they were created. *The beauty of the field is with me.* All is with him, yet not in such a way that he suffers any defilement from what he has created, or stands in any need of it. You need the support that is with you, against which you lean when you are tired. God has no need of the field that is with him. With him is the field, with him the beauty of the earth, with him the beauty of the sky, with him the birds, because before all things were, all things were known to him.

§ 70. *I die because I die not*[2] (Ps. xlix).

Other tribulations find us, as it is written in another psalm (Ps. xliii), *our helper in tribulations which have found us overmuch;* but there is a tribulation which we ought to seek and find for ourselves. What is that? The very fact

[1] *Curtem tuam.* *Curtis*, or *cortis* (see Ducange, *s.v.*) was the *court*, or *courtyard*, round which the house was built.

[2] See St Teresa's canticle on this theme.

that we are not yet with God; the very fact that we live in the midst of temptations and troubles, that we cannot be without fear, that the security promised us is not yet given. He who finds not this tribulation in his pilgrimage, has no idea of going back to his country. If we think and attend to where we are, and where he has promised that we shall be who is incapable of lying, from that very promise we discover in what tribulation we are.

§ 71. *David's sin* (2 Sam. xi; Ps. l).

Men say to themselves: "If David, why not I?" In doing it because David did it, the soul does worse than David did. David had no example set before him, as you would have; he fell by lapse of passion, not under any patronage or precedent of holy men; you do not imitate his holiness, but his fall. You love that in David which David came to hate in himself; you open God's book on purpose to sin; you listen to the reading of the Scriptures to do what is displeasing to God; David did not do that. Other is the behaviour of those who listen profitably. They make the fall of the strong a measure of their own weakness. They keep their eyes from gazing carelessly; they do not fix them on the beauty of strange flesh; they do not set their consciences at rest in a perverse simplicity; they do not say: "Oh, I looked with a right intention, I looked kindly, I took a long look out of charity." They put before them David's fall; and see that that great man fell in order that smaller men may refuse to look on what may cause them a fall. They refrain their eyes from wanton wandering; they do not lightly fall in with any company they meet; they do not mix with strange women; they do not raise easy eyes to the balconies and housetops of other people's houses. David saw her from afar by whom he was ensnared. The woman was far off, but lust was near. Fleshly delight is a thing to curb, not to give the reins to; to subdue by command, not to place in command. But

you reply: "I keep a strong hold on myself." Are you stronger than David? Such an example also warns us not to be elated in prosperity. Prosperity is more dangerous to the soul than adversity to the body. Prosperity first corrupts, then adversity finds something to break. David did not commit this sin when he was suffering under the persecution of Saul.

§ 72. *Hearer better off than preacher* (Ps. l).

*To my hearing thou wilt give joy and gladness.* God grant me to utter what I feel. Happier are they who hear than they who speak. The learner is humble, but the teacher has a difficulty in not being proud, in repelling the inroad of an evil anxiety to please, in not displeasing God while he wishes to please men. There is much trembling in your teacher, my brethren, much trembling of ours over these words of ours. Take the word of our conscience for what you cannot see. May he be indulgent to us, may he be propitious to us, who knows well with what trembling before him we address you. But when we hear him within suggesting and teaching some point, we are secure and rejoice in that security, for then we are under a Master, and seek his glory, and praise his teaching. We are delighted with his truth within, in that sanctuary where none makes and none hears any noise; there the psalmist says is his joy and his gladness.[1]

§ 73. *Domestic discipline* (Ps. l).

The psalm has been brought to a close in the name of Christ, not perhaps quite as we could wish, but to the best of our ability. There remains over a matter on which we wish to address you, brethren, in a few words, by reason of the multitudinous evils in which we live. Living as we do a human life, we cannot migrate away from human

[1] "The subordinate preacher," the principal being the Holy Ghost; so Bunyan in his *Holy War*.

life. We must live among evil men and bear with them, because, when we were evil ourselves, good men lived in our company and bore with us. Not forgetting what we have been, we will not despair of them who are now what we once were.—Well, to come to the point, dear beloved, with this great diversity, this so detestable corruption of moral character around you, do govern your houses, govern your children, govern your households. As it is our office to address you in church, so it is your office in your houses to see to rendering a good account of persons subject to you. God loves discipline. It is a perverse and false innocence to give a loose rein to sin. Very uselessly, very perniciously does the son experience his father's indulgence so as afterwards to experience God's severity, and that not himself alone, but along with his slack sire (*non solus, sed cum dissoluto patre*). Or can anyone say that his not sinning himself, and not behaving as his son behaves, is sufficient excuse for a father's not keeping his son out of wickedness? Is it not likely that the son will think that the father would behave in the same way but for old age? The sin that does not displease you in your son delights you; it is age that has left you innocent, not desire. Especially, my brethren, attend to your sons who belong to the faith, whom you became security for at their baptism. It may be that a wicked son takes no heed of his father's warnings, or scolding, or severity; you fulfil your part, of him God exacts what it is God's part to exact.

§ 74. *Men of the world and men of God* (Ps. li).

Observe two kinds of men, the one toiling, the other those among whom they toil; the one setting their heart on low things, the other conjoining their heart with the angels; the one in hope of earthly goods, wherein this world is strong; the other aspiring to things heavenly, which God has promised, who never lies. But these kinds of men are

blended together. Now we find a citizen of Jerusalem, a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, occupied in some administration on earth; for instance, he wears the purple, he is a magistrate, a town clerk, a proconsul, an emperor, he has a function in the earthly commonwealth, but he has his heart aloft, if he is a Christian faithful man, pious, making little of what he is at, and hoping for what he has not yet reached. Let us, then, not despair of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, when we see them engaged in the business of Babylon, in some earthly charge in an earthly commonwealth. Nor, again, let us not straightway congratulate all men whom we see engaged in heavenly occupations, for the sons of pestilence sometimes sit in the chair of Moses (Matt. xxiii 3). The former in the midst of earthly things raise their heart to heaven; these others in speaking heavenly words let their heart trail on earth. There will come the time of the winnowing (Matt. iii 12), when the two sorts shall be more carefully separated, not one grain of corn passing over to the heap of chaff to be burnt, not one bit of straw passing among the store to be hoarded in the barn.

§ 75. *Destructiveness* (Ps. li).

We want a man to be powerful, but in goodness, not in malice. Is it a great thing to glory in malice? Few men are capable of building a house, any fool can destroy one. Few men know how to sow corn, reap the crop, wait for it to ripen, and rejoice over the harvest-home; any man by application of one spark can set the whole crop on fire. To own a new-born child, rear it after birth, educate it, bring it to man's estate, is a great business; but as for killing it, anyone can do that in an instant. Very easy work it is, all that makes for destruction. *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord* (1 Cor. i 31); let him that glorieth, glory in goodness. You glory because you are powerful in evil. You are prepared to kill a man; a scorpion can do

that, or one attack of fever, or a bad mushroom. Is it to this that all your power is reduced, that you are on a level with a bad mushroom?

§ 76. *God's name pleasant* (*jucundum*) (Ps. li).

*I will wait on thy name, for it is pleasant.* The world is bitter, but thy name is pleasant. And if some things are sweet in the world, they are bitter in the digestion thereof.[1] Thy name stands first, not only in greatness, but also in pleasantness. Many *unrighteous have told me of their delights, but they are not like thy law, O Lord* (Ps. cxviii). Surely, if the martyrs found no sweetness, they would not cheerfully endure such bitter pangs of tribulation. The bitterness they taste anyone might feel, the sweetness that is given them is not easy for anyone to taste. It comes to this—the name of God is pleasant to them that love God above all pleasantnesses. Give me the palate to which it is pleasant. Praise honey as much as you can, enlarge upon its sweetness with all the words in your power; the man who does not know what honey is, does not know what you say, until he has tasted it. The psalmist, therefore, calling you to make further trial, says: *Taste and see that the Lord is sweet* (Ps. xxxiii). But to the man who will not taste how can you prove it? Whatever you say in praise of the pleasantness of the name of God, it is all words, words, words; the taste is something different. Even the impious hear the words of its praise; the holy alone taste its pleasantness. Accordingly, this psalmist, feeling the sweetness of the name of God, and wishing to explain it, and wishing to show it, and not finding any to whom he could show it—for there is no need of showing it to the holy, who taste and know it for themselves, while the impious cannot appreciate what they will not taste—what can he make, then, of the pleasantness of God's name? He abruptly withdraws from the crowds of the

[1] *I.e.*, in their after-effects.

impious, and says: *I will wait upon thy name, because it is pleasant in the sight of thy saints.* Pleasant is thy name, but not in the sight of the impious; I know how sweet it is, but only to them who have tasted.

§ 77. *God's use for bad men* (Ps. liv).

Think not that bad men are in this world for nothing, and that God gets no good out of them. Every bad man either lives to be corrected, or lives that by means of him the good may be exercised. Would, then, that they who now exercise us might be converted and exercised along with us! However, while they are in a position to exercise us, let us not hate them, because for the time that one of them is a bad man we do not know that he will go on being such to the end, and often when you think you are hating an enemy, you are hating a brother and know it not. The devil and his angels are manifest to us in Holy Writ that they are marked out for everlasting fire. Their correction alone is to be despaired of, against whom we have a hidden wrestling, to which wrestling the Apostle arms us, saying: *Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood*, that is, against men whom you see, *but against principalities and powers and rulers of the world of this darkness* (Eph. vi 12). Lest perhaps, when he spoke of the world, you might conceive that the demons are rulers of heaven and earth,[1] he said *the world of this darkness;* he said *the world*, meaning lovers of the world; he said *the world* of impiety and iniquity; he said *the world* of which the Gospel says, *and the world knew him not.*

§ 78. *Unto the end* (Ps. liv).

*The end of the law is Christ, to righteousness for every believer* (Rom. x 4). Let our intention then be directed to the end—directed to Christ. Why is he called the

[1] A favourite position of the pagan philosophers and Manichees of St Augustine's time.

end? Because whatever we do, we refer to him; and when we have reached him, we shall have nothing further to seek. Observe, there are two senses of the word "end": in one sense it means consumption, in another, completion.[1] In one sense we hear "the food is come to an end," that was being eaten; in another sense, "the garment is come to an end," that was being woven. The food ended in ceasing to be any more; the garment ended in being complete. Our end, then, is our achieved completion; our completion is Christ. In him we are complete because we are members of him as our Head.[2] He is also called *the end of the law*, because without him none fulfils the law. When, then, you hear in the psalms, *Unto the end*,[3] for many of the psalms are so entitled, let not your thoughts rest on consumption, but on completion.

§ 79. *Two enemies* (Ps. liv).

Put before thine eyes two enemies, the one open, the other concealed; the open enemy is a man, the concealed enemy the devil. The man is what thou art by human nature; in point of faith and charity he is not yet what thou art, but in the future he may become so. Being as they are two, see the one, understand the other: love the one, beware of the other. The one whom thou seest wishes to abase in thee the excellence wherein he is outdone. For example, if he is outdone by thy wealth, he wishes to make thee poor; if by thy honourable position, to bring thee down to low estate; if by thy strength, to render thee weak; so his object is to lower or to take away the points whereon he is outdone by thee. The concealed

[1] Called by divines respectively *finis finiens* and *finis consummans*, πέρας and τέλος. To a pagan, death is πέρας, as Aristotle calls it (*Ethics*, iii 6); to a Christian it is τέλος, as it was to our Saviour (John xix 30).

[2] He is our completion, πλήρωμα, as we are also his (Eph. i 20).

[3] Represented in the modern Hebrew by "on the stringed instruments."

enemy also wishes to take away that wherein he is outdone by thee. As a man, thou outdoest another man in point of human prosperity, but the devil thou outdoest by love of thine enemy. As, then, man goes about to take away from thee and cut off or upset the prosperity wherein he is outdone, so also the devil wants to outdo man by taking away that wherein he himself is outdone. But do thou take care to keep in thy heart the love of thine enemy, whereby thou outdoest the devil. Let man rage as much as he can, and take away whatever he can; if the enemy is not outdone that rages openly, at any rate that other enemy is outdone who rages secretly.

§ 80. *Gemitus columbae : a bishop's griefs* (Ps. liv).

Often a man tries to correct perverse people, wrongheaded folk, who belong to his care, but in whose case all human industry and vigilance fails; the superior cannot correct, he must fain endure. Even the man you cannot correct is yours, by the common nature which you share of mankind, or in many cases by church communion. The annoyance is within—where will you go? what place of retirement will you find, not to suffer these things? But make up to him, speak, exhort, soothe, threaten, rebuke. I have done everything, I have spent and used to the utmost whatever ability I had, I see that I have done no good, all my labour is lost, my grief alone permanently remains. How, then, shall my heart find rest from such men except by saying, *Who will give me wings as a dove?* As a dove, I say, not as a raven (Gen. viii 6-9). The dove seeks to fly away from trouble, but does not lose its love; for the dove is taken as the sign of love, and is endeared to us by its sighing. No creature is so prone to sighs as the dove; day and night it sighs, as being in a world of sighs. What, then, does this loving heart say? I cannot bear the obloquies of men, they hiss, rage, glow with passion; I can do them no good; oh, that I could rest somewhere, separate

from them in body, though not in affection; my words and conversation avail not to do them any good; possibly by praying for them I shall help them. Men say this, but commonly they are so tied by official ties that they cannot fly. The cares of their office prevent them deserting their charge. In that case let them say: *I could wish to strike tents*[1] *and to be with Christ, that is much the best; but to remain in the flesh is necessary for your sake* (Phil. i 23).

§ 81. *Even in monasteries* . . . (Ps. liv).

Whence think you, brethren, is it that deserts are filled with the servants of God? If it were well with them among men, would they go away from the company of men? And yet what do they? Lo, they go afar in flight, they dwell in the desert; but do they dwell each apart? Charity binds them to dwell in community; and out of that community there arise individuals to exercise their virtue, because in every gathering of a multitude bad subjects must be found. God, who knows that we need exercising, mingles amongst us persons who will not persevere; or even hypocrites who have not yet entered upon a course in which they ought to persevere. He knows it to be necessary for us to bear with bad people; let us love these enemies, rebuke, chastise, excommunicate, yea, separate them from us—with love.

§ 82. *Christ asleep, his Passion forgotten* (Ps. liv).

Perchance the reason why thy bark is tossed is because Christ is asleep in thee. The sea was rough, the boat was tossed in which the disciples were sailing, and Christ was asleep (Matt. viii 24), till at last it occurred to them that there in their midst was sleeping the Commander and Creator of the winds. They drew nigh and aroused Christ; he commanded the winds, and there came on a

[1] *Dissolvi*, ἀναλῦσαι, does not mean *to be dissolved*, but to "pack off."

great calm. Deservedly, then, perhaps is thy heart troubled, because he has fallen out of thy thoughts in whom thou hast believed; thou findest thy suffering unbearable, because it has not come into thy mind what Christ has borne for thee. If Christ does not come into thy mind, he is asleep; rouse Christ, renew thy faith. Then is Christ asleep in thee, if thou hast forgotten the sufferings of Christ; then is Christ awake in thee, when thou rememberest the sufferings of Christ. When with full heart thou hast looked upon what he has suffered, wilt not thou also be content to endure ?—nay, perhaps rejoice because thou hast been found in some similitude of the sufferings of thy King.

§ 83. *Church unity* (Ps. liv).

*In many things they were with me.* We both of us had baptism, in that they were with me; we both read the Gospel, in that they were with me; we kept the solemnity of Easter, in that they were with me. But they were not altogether with me; in schism, they were not with me; in heresy, not with me. In many things with me, in a few things not with me. But on the score of these few things in which they are not with me, those many things cease to avail them in which they are with me. See, brethren, how many things the Apostle Paul sets forth; of one thing he says that, if that is wanting, all those other things are of no avail. *If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and if I have all prophecy and all faith and all knowledge, if I move mountains, if I distribute all my goods to the poor* (1 Cor. xiii). What a long enumeration ! To all these many things let charity alone be wanting; they are more in number, but charity is greater in weight. Therefore in all the Sacraments they are with me, in charity alone they are not with me.[1]

[1] Here, as so often on the Psalms, St Augustine is ingenious and interesting, but misses the real sense. *In multis erant mecum*

§ 84. *Danger of remaining in schism* (Ps. liv).

Brethren, there is one remedy: let them fear God, let them abandon Donatus. You [Donatists] are perishing in heresy and schism; God must visit such things with retribution; you will come to damnation; do not flatter yourself with your talk, do not follow a blind guide, and both fall into the pit (Matt. xv 14). "What is that to me?" my Donatist says; "as I lived yesterday, so will I live to-day; I will be what my parents have been." You are not fearing God; reflect that all that is read [in the Gospel] is true, because it is the faith of Christ which cannot be deceived. How can you remain in heresy in face of so great evidence of the holy Catholic Church which God has spread over all the world, promised it before he spread it, foretold it, and finally exhibited it such as he promised? Let them beware and take heed, who do not fear God. *He hath stretched out his hand in retribution.*

§ 85. *Development of doctrine* (Ps. liv).

Out of heretics it has come about that the Catholic faith has been asserted, and out of the evil-minded has come the proof of the well-minded. Many truths were latent in the Scriptures, till the heretics by their questions agitated the Church of God: then things that were latent were opened out, and the will of God was understood. Hence in the silversmith's craft they are called *exclusores*, who from a confused mass of metal express and bring out some form. Thus many of those best qualified to discern and handle the Scriptures lay low among the people of God, and did not stand up for the solution of difficult

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means "my enemies were about me in crowds." Taking "charity" to mean "Church unity," St Augustine points to the Donatists, whose Orders he recognised, while he questioned their good faith. Our attitude towards our "separated brethren" in England is the reverse of this: their Orders we cannot recognise, their good faith we readily allow. See further § 111.

questions, while no caviller threatened opposition. Was the treatise of the Trinity complete before the Arians opened their mouths to bark? Was the treatise of Penance complete before the resistance of the Novatians?[1] So neither was the treatise on Baptism complete before it was contradicted by persons foreign to the Church, who took to rebaptising. Nor, of the very unity of Christ, was that doctrine delivered in such accurate detail (*enucleate*) as is now taught till after that separation[2] began to press upon and solicit weak brethren, thereby rousing those who had the knowledge necessary for dealing with the question to bring into public notice in sermons and disputations the obscure passages of the Law, to the end that the weak might not perish perplexed by the interrogatories of the impious.

§ 86. *Hard sayings mollified* (Ps. liv).

Sundry Scripture sayings that seemed hard when they were obscure have been softened by explanation. The first heresy among the disciples of Christ was made by what seemed a hardness in his language (John vi 54 *sq.*). *This saying is hard*, etc. And Peter: *Thou hast the word of eternal life*. Did Peter already understand that secret of the saying of the Lord? He did not yet understand, but piously believed that the words which he did not understand were good words. Therefore, if a saying is hard and not yet understood to the impious, let it remain hard, but to thee be it softened by piety, for some day it will be explained, and become to thee as oil and go down even into thy bones. Thou art yet a babe; not yet dost thou understand the secret meaning of words. I may say, thy bread is hidden from thee, and thou art as yet to be

[1] Or was it complete even in St Augustine's time?

[2] The separation of the Donatists. By "the unity of Christ" is meant the unity of the Church. There is no reference to Nestorius's heresy of two persons in Christ, an oriental error which hardly reached the Africa of Augustine. Nestorianism is not on his list of heresies.

fed on milk. Be not angry at being kept at the breast; the milk will render thee fit for the table, for which at present thou art unfit. Through the working of heretical sects (*per divisionem haereticorum*) many hard sayings have been softened. Heretics have raised up armed evangelists, whose speeches are directed to the hearts of their hearers, as they urge them *in season and out of season* (2 Tim. iv 2). By their words, as by so many arrows, the hearts of men are smitten unto love of peace. Those words have not lost their power by being softened, but have been converted into darts. *His words are made smoother than oil, and they*, those softened speeches, *are darts.*

§ 87. *A word to my critics* (Ps. lv).

*They shall watch for my heel.* They keep their eyes on my heel, looking for a slip, to find something to accuse. And who can walk so carefully as never to make a slip? Readily comes a slip of the tongue. *If a man offend not with his tongue, the same is a perfect man* (Jas. iii 2). Who shall dare to call or think himself perfect? A man must make a slip of the tongue sometimes. There are those who lie in wait for me and catch at all my words, laying snares in which themselves are caught and perish rather than effect their purpose of catching and destroying others. Man has recourse to his conscience, and thence has recourse to God, and learns to say, *In God I will praise my words.*[1] Whatever good I have said, whatever truth I have uttered, of God I have said it, and from God I have uttered it. Whatever else possibly I have said, which I ought not to have said, I said it as man, but I said it under God, who strengthens me as I walk, threatens me when I am going astray, pardons me when I avow my error, recalls my utterance, revokes my false steps. *The just shall*

[1] That is, "with God's help I will celebrate the accomplishment of my predictions."

*fall seven times and rise again, the wicked shall fall sick*[1] *in evil* (Prov. xxiv 16). Let each of us, then, lay aside fear of these crafty persecutors, snappers up of words, counters almost of syllables, and transgressors of precepts. He is looking to find fault in thee, he is not looking to find Christ through thee. Look to what your author says, Mr. Critic, look to the words of the man you blame; maybe he will teach you something to your advantage. "And how can he teach me anything to my advantage, who made such a slip over a word?" Perhaps this may be a lesson to your advantage, not to catch at words, but collect and lay to heart precepts.

§ 88. *God, for God's own sake* (Ps. lv).

Let us then love God, brethren, purely and chastely. It is not a chaste heart, that worships God in view of reward.[2] What, then, shall we have no reward for worshipping God? Certainly we shall, but the reward will be the very God whom we worship. He shall be our reward, because *we shall see him as he is* (1 John iii 2). What does our Lord Jesus Christ say to them that love him? *He that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him.* What then wilt thou give him? *And I will show myself to him* (John xiv 23). If thou lovest him not, the promise is too little; if thou lovest him gratuitously by whom thou hast been bought gratuitously, if thy heart throbs with longing for him, then seek not anything external away from him—he is enough for thee. Greedy as thou mayest be, God is enough for thee. Learn from human marriages what it is to keep a chaste heart for God. Many marriages have been tested by the misfortunes of husbands; not to be thought to love anything else than their husbands, wives

[1] *Infirmabuntur.* St Augustine reads the Septuagint *ἀσθενήσουσιν.*

[2] Earthly reward, as the subsequent context shows.

have not only not deserted them in their distress, but have heaped up their attentions to them. How then is God to be loved, the true and truthful husband of the soul! Let us love him so that besides him nothing else be loved. It is said of some people, *They did not invoke the Lord* (Ps. xiii). They thought they were invoking the Lord, and they petitioned him concerning inheritances, money profits, prolongation of life, and other temporal matters. What does Scripture say of such? *They feared there where there was no fear* (*ib.*); withdrawal of money, diminution of household stuff, finally the having fewer years in this life than they had reckoned on for themselves. They were just like those Jews who feared lest *the Romans will come and take away our place and nation* (John xi 48). Great are the riches of the heart, great the light of the inward eye, great the secure confidence which says, *Lo, I have known that thou art my God.*

§ 89. *Job* (Ps. lv).

Lo, I love my God; no one takes him away from me; what I have to give him no one takes away from me, because it is shut up in my heart. What can man do to me? Let him rage, let him be allowed to do what he tries to do, what is he going to take away? Gold, silver, flocks, male and female slaves, farms, houses? Let him take all; does he take away the *vows of praise* that are in me to *pay to God?* The tempter was allowed to tempt the holy man Job; in one instant of time he took away everything; he took away his inheritance, he killed his heirs; and this not gradually, but at one blow, so that the news came in upon the sufferer all at once. When all was lost, Job remained alone; but there were within him *vows of praise to pay* to God—yes, they were within him; that thief of a devil had not got into the ark of his holy breast, he was full of material for sacrifice. God has given you faith, hope and charity;

that is the material for you to bring out, that to sacrifice. A man may want to have gold, and lose gold; no man will ever lose faith except by voluntary rejection of it (*fidem nemo perdet nisi qui spreverit*). Therefore, brethren, let this be to us the lesson of the whole discourse, that we should love God gratuitously, hope in him always, and fear neither man nor devil. Neither the one nor the other can do anything unless he is permitted; and nothing can be permitted him except what is for our good. Let us endure the bad, and be good, because we have been bad ourselves. Let us despair of no man, and pray for all whom we have to endure. Let us never go away from God, let him be our patrimony, our hope, our salvation. In this world he is our comforter, in the next our rewarder, in both our giver of life. So be it that here in the light of faith, there in the light of vision, in the light of the living, in the sight of the Lord, we may be pleasing to God.

§ 90. *The Author of our faith* (Ps. lvi).

The whole Christ is Head and Body—the Head our Saviour, who suffered, rose again, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; the Body his Church, not this Church, or that Church, but the Church spread throughout the world; nor, again, merely the Church that now is among men at present alive, but including the men that have been before us, and those that shall come after us even to the end of the world—the whole Church, I say, consisting of all the faithful, for all the faithful are members of Christ. The Head of this Church is set in heaven, governing his Body, screened off from view, but united in charity. Therefore in all the psalms let us hear at once the cries of the Head and the cries of the Body. He would not speak apart, because he would not be apart, saying, *Lo, I am with you even to the end of the world* (Matt. xxviii 20). If he is with us, he speaks in us, he speaks of us, he speaks

through us; and that is why we speak the truth, because we speak in him. For when we shall wish to speak in ourselves and of ourselves, we shall remain in a lie.[1]

§ 91. *Till iniquity pass away* (Ps. lvi).

You pass away, and behold, your temptations have passed away; and you go into another life, into which the saints have gone, if you are a saint. Into that other life the martyrs have gone; you go into that other life, if you are a martyr. Does it follow that because you have passed hence, therefore iniquity has at last passed away? Other wicked men are born, as other wicked men die; so other righteous men go, and others are born. Even to the end of the world there will be no cessation either of iniquity oppressing, or of righteousness oppressed (*nec iniquitas deerit premens, nec justitia patiens*).

§ 92. *The Ascension and the Church* (Ps. lvi).

Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God. Man on the cross, and above the heavens God. Brethren, we do not see God exalted above the heavens, but we believe in him. But his glory spread all over the earth we not only believe, but see. I pray you, notice the infatuation under which heretics labour. Cut off from the framework of the Church of Christ—holding a part, not the whole—they refuse to live in the communion of the whole world, through which the glory of Christ is spread. O heretical madness! What you do not see, you believe with me; what you do see, you deny. With me you believe in Christ exalted above the heavens, a thing that you do not see; and you deny what we do see, his glory all the earth over.[2]

[1] That is just what Protestant Private Judgement comes to! It is "speaking in ourselves and of ourselves."

[2] The heretic of our times (Oxford, 1919) has got more method in his madness. In one and the same breath he denies both articles, "the holy Catholic Church" and "He ascended into heaven."

§ 93. *Money or my honour* (Ps. lvii).

If you are asked which is better, your money or your honour, you are not so perverse and wide of all truth as to answer that money is better. I note your answer, preferring honour to money. Behold a friend has come, and without witness has entrusted a sum of money; he alone knows it and you, so far as human knowledge goes; there is another Witness, who is not seen and sees, a Witness present, not in a room between walls, but in the beds of both your consciences. Your friend has made his deposit and departed, without acquainting any of his people, hoping to return and receive from his friend what he had given. As human luck goes, he dies, leaving a son and heir; the son knows nothing of what his father had, and entrusted to you. Come now, *prevaricator*, *return to thy heart* (Isa. xvii 3); there the law is written. *Do not to another what thou wouldst not have done to thyself* (Matt. vii 12). Imagine yourself to have given the trust, to have told none of your people, to be dead and have left a son; what would you wish to see done for him on the part of your friend? Answer, judge the case, the judge's tribunal is in your mind, your conscience is your accuser there, the only rackmaster conscientious scruple. You are in human business, you are maintained in human society; think what you would have done for your son by your friend. I know what your thought replies. The voice of truth is not silent; it shouts not with the lips, but cries from the heart; bow down your ear and listen. You see, perhaps, the lad wandering about in need, not knowing what his father had, where he put it, to whom he entrusted it; think of your own son, imagine him alive whom you despise as dead, fancy yourself dead that you may live. But avarice bids against God, God one thing, avarice another. Lo, you are thinking of denying the receipt of the money, you are thinking of hiding it altogether from your friend's

heir. You told me that honour was better, and in your practical judgement you have reckoned money the better. You have witnessed truly, and judged falsely.

§ 94. *The deaf asp* (Ps. lvii).

Hear what the asp does when it begins to suffer from the incantations of the Marsian,[1] who tries to call it forth by magic spells. When a comparison is given, it is not the thing itself that is praised, only the comparison is drawn. Our Lord did not praise the unjust judge (Luke xviii 2), nor him who gave the loaves, not for friendship, but for very weariness of importunity (Luke xi 8). Thus sundry comparisons are drawn from things not praiseworthy.[2] The Marsian then uses incantations to draw the asp from its dark hole: but the creature, loving its darkness, in which it lies concealed, coiled up, not wishing to come out, refusing to hear those notes whereby it feels itself constrained, presses one ear on the ground, and stops the other ear with its tail, and so avoids hearing the notes and coming out to meet the enchanter. To this deaf asp, *that stops its ears*, the Spirit of God compares certain persons, who not only do not fulfil the word of God, but altogether refuse to hear it.

§ 95. *Needing no Redeemer* (Ps. lviii).

There are strong-minded persons, who presume, not on riches, not on bodily strength, not on their rank in life, but on their moral rectitude. This is a class of strong men to beware of, fear, shun, and not imitate. Such was the strength that hindered the Jews from passing through the eye of the needle (Matt. xix 24). Presuming on themselves, on their righteousness and moral soundness, they refused medicine and put to death their Physician. Not to save

[1] The Marsi were an Italian tribe, living in the Apennines, by the Fucine Lake, due east of Rome, celebrated as wizards.

[2] Even a sin may be a type.

such strong men did he come, who said: *They who are in health need no physician, but they who are sick* (Matt. ix 12). O ye strong men, who need no physician! Such strength belongs not to health but to insanity. Nothing is stronger than madmen; they are much more vigorous than the healthy; but the greater their strength, the nearer is their death. God keep us from imitating such strong men! They took the Lamb for a goat; and slaying him as a goat, they did not deserve to be redeemed by the Lamb.

§ 96. *Sin not acknowledged, sin not forgiven* (Ps. lviii).

*Have no mercy on any who work iniquity.* This may be understood in two ways, either as meaning that God leaves no sins at all unpunished, or that there is a certain iniquity to the doers of which God never shows mercy at all. On these two ways we will speak to Your Charity briefly as the time allows. Every iniquity, be it small or great, must be punished either by the man himself or by God avenging. For he who repents punishes himself. Brethren, let us punish our sins, if we seek mercy of God. God cannot have mercy on all who work iniquity, by himself, as it were, conniving at sins, or failing to root out sins. It comes to this, either you punish or he punishes. Do you wish him not to punish? Punish yourself. You have done that which cannot go unpunished, but rather let it be punished by yourself, doing what is written in the psalm: *Let us go before his face in confession* (Ps. xciv). That is to say, before he turns his attention to punishing you, do you go before in confessing your sin and punish yourself. Let him not find anything to punish; because when you punish iniquity, you do equity, and therefore God will have mercy on you, because he finds you doing equity. That is, you are hating in yourself what he hates, and so are beginning to please God by punishing in yourself what displeases God. Let us see now the other way in which the text may be understood. There is a certain

iniquity such that the doer thereof cannot receive mercy of God. Perhaps you wish to know what that iniquity is. It consists in standing up for your sins. When a man stands up for his sins, he commits a great iniquity; he stands up for what God hates. What a perversity, what an iniquity! Any good that the man has done, he wishes to be imputed to himself; any evil, he would have imputed to God. How so? There is no man who dares to say, adultery is good, murder is good, fraud is good, perjury is good; no man whatever. They who do such things cry out when they have them done to themselves. Absolutely you find no soul so perverse, none such an outlaw from the society of mankind, and the partaking of our common blood-relationship in Adam, as to reckon, as I said, adultery to be good, fraud, rapine, perjury. But how do they stand up for such things? "If God had not willed it, I should not have done it; what would you have me do with my fate?" Asked what fate is, you have recourse to the stars. Asked who made and ordered the stars, you say it is God.[1] Therefore in standing up for your sin you turn to accusing of God. The criminal is excused by throwing the blame on the judge. On such workers of iniquity God has absolutely no mercy.

§ 97. *God, my mercy* (Ps. lviii).

I was dangerously ill with a deep wound. That wound of mine required an almighty physician. To an almighty physician nothing is incurable: he gives up no case as hopeless. You must wish to be treated, you must not shrink from his hand. Even if you do not wish for treatment, your wound admonishes you to seek it. *His mercy shall forestall me.* Think of that *shall forestall me.* If you have brought in any good of your own first, and by any good of your own coming first have merited the mercy of God,

[1] Discredited though astrology be in our day, there is still a great deal of fatalism.

his mercy does not forestall you. *What is it that you have not received? and if you have received it, why do you glory as if you had not received?* (1 Cor. iv 7). That is the meaning of *His mercy shall forestall me.* Finally, observing that all good things whatsoever we can have in the way of natural gifts, of education, of our conversion to God, of faith, hope, charity and good manners, of justice, of fear of God, are wholly of his mere gift, the psalmist thus concludes: *O God, my mercy.* Filled with the good things of God, he finds no other name to call God than *my mercy.* O name, under which no one should despair! What means *my mercy?* If you say " my salvation," I understand that he gives salvation. If you say " my refuge," I understand that you take refuge with him. If you say " my strength," I understand that he gives you strength. But what is " my mercy "? It means that all whatsoever I am is of thy mercy.

§ 98. *The prayer that is certainly heard* (Ps. lix).

Let Your Charity understand: every faithful man, keeping in his heart the word of God with fear, dreading the judgement to come, living a fairly good life [*viventem probabiliter*], so that the holy name of his Lord is not blasphemed of his doing, makes many petitions according to this life, and is not heard, but is always heard for what makes for life everlasting. Who is there that does not ask for health, when he is ill? and yet perhaps it is to his advantage to continue ill. It may well be that on this point you are not heard; but the truth is, that you are not heard to your wish, that you may be heard to your advantage (*non exaudiaris ad voluntatem ut exaudiaris ad utilitatem*). But when you ask God to give you life everlasting, to give you the kingdom of heaven, to give you to sit at the right hand of his Son, rest assured that you shall receive, even if you do not receive now, the time having not yet come for you to receive. You are heard without

knowing it; what you ask is being done, although you do not know in what detail it is being done. The thing is in root, not yet in fruit.

§ 99. *Waiting for those who are to come after us* (Ps. lx).

Let the enemy rage as much as he likes, let him assail me, let him lay snares for me, let him multiply scandals and make my heart ache, the Church will not be beaten, she will not be rooted out, she will not succumb to any temptations, until there come the end of this world, and from this temporal dwelling we be received into that dwelling everlasting to which he will be our guide who is *made our hope*. You would wish the temptations to be a matter of a few days; but how could the Church collect all her sons, if she were not long here, if she did not continue even to the end? Do not grudge it to the rest who are to come after us; do not wish to cut away the gangway of mercy because you have already passed over, let it remain here for ages. Therefore since this sojourner (the Church) is to remain on earth for ages, what are her hopes of perseverance? *I shall be shrouded under cover of thy wings*. That is how we rest assured under so many temptations, till the end of the world comes, and the ages of eternity receive us. The world is stifling hot, but great is the shade under the wings of God.

§ 100. *Eternity* (Ps. lx).

Christ is our Head, our King. *Thou hast given him days upon days*, not only these days in this time that comes to an end, but *days upon days* without end. *I will dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days* (Ps. xxii). Why *unto length of days* except because now there is shortness of days? Everything that has an end is short; but of this King are *days upon days*, that is to say, not only is Christ

to reign in his Church during the days that pass, but his saints are to reign with him during those days that have no end. One day there is there, and there are there many days. Of the many days I have already spoken. Of the one day the text is to be understood: *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee* (Ps. ii). *This day* is our day; but that one day does not come in between yesterday and to-morrow, nor is the beginning of it the end of yesterday, nor the end of it the beginning of to-morrow. We find mention also of the years of God. *Thou art the self-same, and thy years shall not fail* (Ps. ci). *Years* in the same sense as *days*, in the same sense as *one day*. Say whatever you will of eternity, because, whatever you say, you say too little. Only you must say something, to have matter of thought about that which cannot be uttered.

§ 101. *The balance due of suffering* (Ps. lxi).

One Man, with Head and Body thereto proper, is Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the Body and the members of the Body, two in one flesh, and in one voice, and in one suffering, and, when iniquity shall have passed away, in one rest. Thus the sufferings of Christ are not in Christ alone—nay, the sufferings of Christ are in Christ alone. If by Christ you understand both Head and Body, the sufferings of Christ are in Christ alone; but if by Christ you understand the Head only, the sufferings of Christ are not in Christ alone. Thus a member of his, the Apostle Paul, writes: *That I may supply what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh* (Col. i 24). If, then, you are among the members of Christ, whatever man you are who hear this, and whatever man you are who at present do not hear this—but, I must say, you do hear it, if you are among the members of Christ—whatever you suffer from them who are not members of Christ, was wanting to the sufferings of Christ. You fill up the measure, you do not make it run over: you suffer just so much as had to be

added to make up the entire suffering of Christ, who suffered in himself as our Head, and suffers in his members, that is, in ourselves. To this our common stock we each in our small measure contribute our share; and in proportion to the size of our estate of strength we pay up what I may call our assessment of sufferings. The balance due of suffering will not be paid up in full till the world comes to an end.[1]

§ 102. *The two cities* (Ps. lxi).

All who are earthly-minded, all who *seek their own, not the things that are of Jesus Christ* (Phil. ii 21), belong to that one city which is mystically called Babylon, and has the devil for its king. All who *mind the things that are above* (Col. iii 1), who meditate heavenly things, who live in the world with solicitude not to offend God, who are on their guard against sin, and who, if they do sin, are not ashamed to confess—all the humble, meek, holy, just, pious, good, belong to one city which has Christ for its King. These two bodies, acting under two kings, and making up two separate cities, stand opposed to one another to the end of the world. Then they shall be separated, whereas they are now blended; the one shall be placed at the right hand, the other on the left. To the one shall be said, *Come, ye blessed;* to the other, *Go ye into everlasting fire* (Matt. xxv).[2]

§ 103. *The resurrection of the body* (Ps. lxii).

Hear ye, and learn and understand, what is the hope of Christians, why we are Christians. We are not Christians

[1] St Augustine uses here fiscal terms, too familiar in African ears under the dunning of Roman tax-gatherers. *Pro possessione virium canonem passionum . . . pariatoria passionum. Canon*, under the Emperors, meant an extraordinary assessment, like our old "benevolences." *Pariator*, from *par*, meant one who *balanced* accounts: hence *pariatorium*, "the balance."

[2] These two cities furnish the theme of St Augustine's great work *On the City of God.*

to seek earthly happiness, which often falls to the lot of robbers and criminals. It is for another happiness that we are Christians, and that we shall have when the life of this world shall have all passed away. So then there is promised us the resurrection of the flesh, the final resurrection of that flesh which we now bear. Let it not seem incredible to you; for if God has made us when we were not, is it too great a thing for him to make us up again to what we were? You see the dead rot and go into dust and ashes. Or if a dead man be burnt, or dogs devour him, think you that he will not rise from thence? All those mangled and burnt and rotted-away bodies are entire in the view of God. They go into those elements of the world from whence they came when we were made. We do not see them, but God will produce them, he knows whence, because, before we were, he produced us, he knew whence. The resurrection promised us is such that, though the flesh we now bear is to rise again, yet it is not to have the corruptibility which now it has. Now, from the corruptibility of our frail condition, if we do not eat, we faint and hunger; if we do not drink, we faint and thirst; if we sit up late, we faint and sleep; if we sleep long, we are tired, and therefore get up; if we stay long at table eating and drinking, the very length of the refreshment makes us weary; standing long, we are tired, and so sit down; and if we sit long, there also we are tired, and therefore rise. Then see how there is no stability in our flesh; infancy flies away into boyhood, and you seek infancy, and there is no infancy, because boyhood is in place of infancy; it again passes into youth, you seek boyhood and find it not; the youth becomes a man [*adolescens fit juvenis*], you seek the youth, and he is not; the man becomes an old man, you seek the man and find him not; and the old man dies, you seek the old man and find him nowhere. There is no standing still in the years of our life, but everywhere fatigue, everywhere weariness, everywhere corruption. Considering what excellent

hope God holds out to us of resurrection, in all these manifold fallings away we thirst after that incorruption; and so in ways manifold, our flesh thirsts after God.

§ 104. *The desert of Edom* (Ps. lxii).

*In a desert land, without way and without water.* This world is the desert of Edom, whence this psalm is entitled. An evil wilderness, horrible and dreadful, and yet God has had mercy on us, and made us a way in the wilderness, our Lord Jesus Christ, and has given us consolation in the desert by sending us preachers of his word; and has given us water in the desert, filling his preachers with the Holy Ghost, to the end that there might be in them *a fountain of water springing up to life everlasting* (John iv 14). Lo, we have here all things, but they are not of the desert. See then, brethren, how while our flesh is mortal and frail before the resurrection, it has those comforts on which we live, bread, water, fruit, wine, oil—forsaken of all these comforts and aids, we certainly cannot go on—though this flesh has not yet received its perfect health, wherein it will suffer no distress, and know no need; so also while our soul is still weak in this flesh, amid the dangers and temptations of this life, it too has the comforts of the Word, the comforts of prayer, the comforts of theological study (*solatia disputationis*): these are the comforts of our soul, as those are of our flesh. But when our flesh shall have risen again, so that we shall no longer need these bodily aids, it will have a position and state of incorruption all its own; so too shall our soul have for its food the very Word of God by whom all things were made. Still, thanks be to God, who at present does not desert us in this wilderness, giving us alike what is necessary for our flesh and what is necessary for our soul. Even when he teaches us a lesson by letting us feel some pinch of necessity, he wishes thereby to bring us to love him more, lest we be corrupted by over-indulgence and forget him. He with-

draws from us at times things necessary, and galls us, letting us know that he is Father and Lord, not only fondling, but also scourging: for he is preparing us for an inheritance, incorruptible and great.

§ 105. *Christ slain by the tongue* (Ps. lxiii).

*Thou hast protected me from the gathering of the malignant, from the multitude of them that work iniquity.* Now let us look upon our Head. Many martyrs have suffered such things, but nothing so shines forth as does the Head of martyrs; there we better behold what they experienced. He was protected from the multitude of the malignant, God protecting himself, the Son of God and the Humanity which he bore protecting his own flesh, because he is Son of God and Son of Man, Son of God by reason of *the form of God*, Son of Man by reason of *the form of a servant* (Phil. ii 6, 7), having it in his power to lay down his life and to take it up again (John x 12). What could his enemies do to hurt him? They killed the body, the soul they killed not (Matt. x 28). Observe: it was little enough for the Lord to exhort the martyrs by word, unless he also strengthened them by example. You know what a gathering there was of malignant Jews, and what a multitude of them that were working iniquity. What iniquity? That whereby they wanted to put to death our Lord Jesus Christ. *So many good deeds*, he said, *I have shown you; for which of them do you wish to put me to death?* (John x 32). He bore with all the weak among them, he healed all the sick among them, he preached the kingdom of heaven, he was not silent as to their vices, that those vices rather might displease them, not the physician who was working their cure. Ungrateful for all these his works of healing, like patients in the delirium of a high fever, mad against the physician who had come to cure them, they contrived a design for destroying him, as wishing thereby to put it to the test whether he were a man, who could die, or some-

thing above man, and would not suffer himself to die. We recognise their word in the Wisdom of Solomon: *Let us condemn him to a disgraceful death ; let us question him, for there will be something to take hold of in his words ; if he be truly the Son of God, let God deliver him* (Wisd. ii 20). Let not the Jews say, We did not kill Christ. The fact was, they gave him up to be judged by Pilate, that so they might seem to have no hand in his death (John xviii 31). They wished to throw the iniquity of their deed on to a human judge; but did they escape the penetration of the Divine Judge ? As for what Pilate did, in his doing it he was to some extent an accomplice in their crime; but in comparison with them he was much the more innocent. He pressed every point he could to deliver him from their hands. It was not in cruelty that he scourged our Lord, but in the wish to satisfy their fury, that even so they might be appeased, and cease to wish to put him to death, when they saw him scourged. But when they held to their purpose, you know that Pilate washed his hands, and said that he was clear of his death, as he had not done the deed. He did it all the same. But if Pilate was guilty for doing it against his will, were they innocent who forced him to do it ? Not at all. Pilate pronounced sentence on him, and ordered him to be crucified, and in some sort put him to death himself; and ye also ye Jews, put him to death. And wherewith did ye put him to death ? With the sword of the tongue. For ye *sharpened your tongues.* And when did ye strike, but when ye cried, *Crucify him, crucify him?*

§ 106. *The exaltation of the Crucified* (Ps. lxiii).

*Man shall draw nigh, and the heart is deep, and God shall be exalted.*[1] *They failed in their careful searchings, their*

[1] *Et cor altum,* St Augustine reads, right according to the Hebrew. The modern Vulgate has *ad cor altum :* so too the Breviary. But St Augustine is scarcely right in referring *homo* to Christ. *Homo* here is God's adversary.

*evil counsel.* The Man drew nigh to the said counsels; he suffered himself to be held captive as Man, for he could not be held captive but as Man, or seen but as Man, or be struck but as Man, or be crucified or die but as Man. But if he were not Man, there would be no deliverance for man. Man drew nigh, and the heart is deep, that is, the heart is secret, exposing to human looks the Man, keeping hidden within him the God; hiding the form of God, in which he is equal to the Father, and offering the form of a servant, in which he is less than the Father (Phil. ii 5-7; John x 30; xiv 28). Man is slain, and God is exalted. In that he was slain, it was of human weakness; in that he rose again and ascended, it was of divine power. His was a *deep heart*, a secret heart, a hidden heart, not showing what he knew, not showing what he was. They thinking that what was seen was the whole of him, slay the man of the deep heart (purpose), and God is exalted of the divine heart (purpose). By the power of his own majesty, he was exalted. And whither went he in his exaltation? Thither whence he never departed in his humiliation [*quo ivit exaltatus? unde non recessit humiliatus*]. Whither did they carry their careful searchings, wherein they failed? So far that, even when the Lord was dead and buried, they set a watch at his sepulchre. They said to Pilate: *That mountebank*, etc. (Matt. xxvii 62-66): by this name our Lord Jesus Christ was called for the comfort of his servants when they are called mountebanks. So they set soldiers to guard the sepulchre. The earth shook, the Lord rose again, miracles were wrought about the sepulchre such that those same soldiers who had come to guard it might be witnesses thereto, did they choose to tell the truth. But the avarice that had led captive the disciple, the companion of Christ, led captive also the soldier, the guardian of his sepulchre. *We give you money, and you say that while you slept, his disciples came and took him away.* What is it that thou hast said, O unhappy cunning? Dost thou bring

up sleeping witnesses? Truly thyself hast dropped off to sleep, who hast so broken down in thy searchings.

§ 107. *The right of heart* (Ps. lxiii).

Who are the right of heart? They who, whatever they suffer in this life, do not put it down to unwisdom, but to God's design for their medicine; they who presume not on their own righteousness, fancying that their sufferings are unjust, or that God is unjust; because the greater sinner is not the greater sufferer. "Well," you say, "supposing I am a sinner, and am scourged on that account, why is not my neighbour scourged, whose many enormities I know well?" Your heart is awry. The God of Israel is good, but to the right of heart. Let him do the cure; he knows the cure who knows the wound. Your neighbour is not operated on; what if his case is desperate, while you are operated on, because your case is not desperate? Whatever you suffer, suffer it with a right heart. God knows what to give you, and what to withhold from you. But if you blaspheme, and are dissatisfied with God, and satisfied with yourself, your heart is perverse and awry; and that all the worse because you wish to correct the heart of God by your own heart, so that God should do what you wish, whereas you ought to do what he wishes. Did not the Lord teach you this? Did he not show the figure of you in himself when he said: *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me* (Matt. xxvi 19)? There were not two different hearts of the Father and the Son, but in the form of a servant he bore thy heart, to teach thee by his example. God consents not to thy heart: consent thou to the heart of God. If thou wilt, is it not done today? If thou wilt, is it not done now? Lo, while I speak, change thy heart; and that is done the doing of which has been called for so often and so long, and the failing to do which is fraught with everlasting punishment.[1]

[1] *Heart* throughout this passage stands for *will*.

§ 108. *The good things of God's house* (Ps. lxiv).

What are the good things of God's house? Brethren, let us put before our mind some wealthy house, see how full it is of good things, how many vessels there are of gold and silver, what a household of servants, of beasts of burden and other animals; how delightful the house looks with pictures, marbles, panelled ceilings, columns, galleries and private rooms. Such things are desired, but the desire is born of the muddling of Babylon. Retrench all those desires, thou citizen of Jerusalem, retrench them; if thou wouldst return home, take no delight in thy captivity. Hast thou begun already to go out? Then look not back, and hesitate not on the way. There is still no lack of enemies, who would persuade thee to love captivity and being away from home; let not the speeches of the wicked prevail over thee. Desire God's house, and desire the goods of his house, but not such goods as thou art wont to desire in thine own house, or in the house of thy neighbour, or of thy patron. The good of that house is a different thing altogether. Why should we tell the good things of that house? Let him tell them who sings as he goes out from Babylon: *We shall be filled with the good things of thy house.* Our heart, perhaps, had flown off to gold and silver and other such precious things; seek them not; they weigh thee down instead of lifting thee up. *We shall be filled with the good things of thy house; holy is thy temple, wonderful in righteousness.*[1] These are the good things of that house. He did not say: Thy holy temple is wonderful in columns, in marbles, in gilt roofs, but in righteousness. You have on the surface eyes to see marble and gold; the eye for seeing the beauty of righteousness is within. If there is no beauty in righteousness, how is it that a righteous old man is loved? What does his frame present to delight the eye?

[1] For the rest of this extract, "righteousness" should be construed to mean sanctifying grace.

Stooping limbs, a wrinkled forehead, a shock of white hair, weakness everywhere, full of complaints. But perhaps, though this old man does not delight thy eyes, he delights thy ears. With what music, with what song? In his youth he may have been a good singer, but everything has failed with age. But perhaps the sound of his words delights the ears; why, he clips his words, his teeth having fallen out. Yet he will pass well, if he is righteous, if he does not covet other men's property, if he gives of his own what he has to the needy, if his admonition is good, and his taste correct, and his faith entire, if he is ready to sacrifice even his crippled limbs for the true faith; for many, even martyrs, have been old men. Why, then, do we love him? What good do we see in him with the eyes of flesh? None at all. There is, then, such a thing as the beauty of righteousness, which we see with the eye of the heart, and love, and wax enthusiastic over. These are the good things of the house of God; with these prepare to be filled.

§ 109. *The Church's rest* (Ps. lxiv; Matt. xiii 47 *sq.*).

*O hope of all the ends of the earth, and in the sea afar.* By the sea is figuratively meant this world, bitter with falsehood, restless with squalls, where men of perverse and evil passions become like fishes devouring one another, Mark this evil sea, this bitter sea, with raging waves; mark what manner of men it is full of. Who desires an inheritance except by the death of another? Who desires gain otherwise than by another man's loss?[1] How many desire to rise on the ruin of others? How they do crush one another, and devour one another, when they can! And when one bigger fish has swallowed a smaller fish, he is himself swallowed by a bigger. Thou wicked fish, thou wishest to make a prey of the smaller, and thou art made a prey of by the larger. These things happen every

[1] Not the correct theory of commerce, but unfortunately too often the fact.

day before our eyes; we see them and have a horror of them. Let us not do them, brethren, we whose hope is the hope of the ends of the earth. Now that we are caught in the sea with the nets of faith, let us be glad there to swim within the nets; the sea still rages and storms, but the nets that have caught us shall be dragged to the shore. The shore is the end of the sea; our safe arrival shall be at the end of the world. Meanwhile, brethren, let us live well within these same nets; let us not break the nets and get out. Many have broken the nets, and made schisms and gone out. Because they [the Donatists] said they could not stand the bad fish caught in the nets, they themselves became bad, more so even than those others whom they said they could not stand. Come then, ye citizens of Jerusalem who are within the nets, and are good fish, tolerate the bad, take care not to break the nets; you are with those people in the sea, you shall not be with them in the vessels. *They gathered the good into vessels, but the good-for-nothing they cast away* (Matt. xiii 48).

§ 110. *Glory to God* (Ps. lxv).

The Lord chose orators afterwards, but they might have been proud if he had not first chosen fishermen. He chose rich men, but they might have said that they had been chosen for the merit of their riches, if he had not first chosen the poor. He afterwards chose Emperors; but it is better for the Emperor, coming to Rome, to lay aside his diadem and weep at the Memorial of the Fisherman than for the Fisherman to weep at the Memorial of the Emperor. See how he has taken away from us glory to give us glory; he has taken away ours to give us his; he has taken away vain and empty glory to give us full glory; he has taken away the glory that totters to give us that which stands firm. How much stronger and firmer is our glory for its being in God !

§ 111. *Kindness to those outside the Church* (Ps. lxv).

Brethren, if we ought not to vaunt ourselves against the Jews, who were of old cut off from the root of the patriarchs (Rom. xi 17-22), but rather to fear, and say to God, *how terrible are thy works*, how much less ought we to vaunt ourselves when we look on recent wounds of separation. The Jews were cut off, and the Gentiles engrafted in their place; from that very graft heretics have been cut off; yet neither against them ought we to vaunt ourselves, lest perchance he deserve to be cut off himself who takes delight in insulting others cut off. My brethren, it is the voice of your bishop, whatever sort of bishop he be, your bishop's voice that has sounded in your ears; we beseech all of you who are in the Church to be on your guard, and do not insult those who are not within, but pray rather that they too may come to be within, *for God is able to engraft them again* (Rom. xi 23). The Apostle said this of the Jews, and it was done in their case. The Lord rose, and many believed; when he was crucified, they understood not, but afterwards they believed, and their so great offence was pardoned them. The shedding of the Lord's blood was pardoned to the homicides—I will not say deicides, because *if they had known, they never would have crucified the Lord of glory* (1 Cor. ii 8). The shedding of the blood of the innocent has now been pardoned to the homicides, and they have come to drink by grace the very Blood which they shed. Say then to God, *How terrible are thy works!* Rejoice in them, and tremble at the same time; and never vaunt yourself over the branches that have been cut off.

§ 112. *Liars do not last* (Ps. lxv).

Lo they lie, lo they are believed, lo thou art overborne, lo thou art crucified, lo thou art insulted, lo they wag the head against thee: *IF he is the Son of God, let him come down from the cross* (Matt. xxvii 40). Lo, when thou willest,

thou layest down thy life, and art smitten in the side with a spear, and Sacraments flow from thy side; thou art taken down from the cross, wrapped in linen cloths, laid in the sepulchre, guards are brought up lest thy disciples should take thee away; the hour of thy resurrection comes, earth shakes, monuments are opened, thou risest unseen, thou appearest visibly. Where, then are those liars? Where is the false witness of malice? Is it not true that *in the multitude of thy power thine enemies have lied against thee?*[1]

§ 113. *Rejoicing in the Lord* (Ps. lxv).

*The river they shall pass on foot; there shall we rejoice in him.* When shall we rejoice? When we have passed the river on foot. Life everlasting is promised, resurrection is promised; there our fleshly condition shall no longer be a river; a river it is now, so long as mortality lasts. See if any age is stationary. Boys want to grow, and know not how the space of their life is diminished by the succession of years. Years are not added but withdrawn as boys grow, and yet boys want to grow fast so as to escape the control of their elders. So they do grow; the thing is soon done, they reach the fulness of manhood. Having gone beyond boyhood, let them hold their manhood, if they can; but that too passes away. Old age succeeds; oh, that old age itself could be everlasting—no, it is taken away by death. This river of mortality he passes easily who passes humbly—that is, on foot, taking care not to be swept away by the current of covetousness, of perishable things, taking him for his guide who passed before, and drank of the torrent of the way even unto death, and so came to lift up his head (Ps. cix). Passing this river on foot, that is, lightly passing over this flux of mortality, we shall there *rejoice in him.* But at present what is there to

[1] The Hebrew means *have paid thee insincere homage.* But it is not to St Augustine that we must go for literal meanings.

rejoice in, except in him, or in the hope of him? Even now we rejoice in him in hope, but then *face to face* (1 Cor. xiii 12).

§ 114. *Fire and water* (Ps. lxv).

*We have passed through fire and water.* Such are the temptations with which this life abounds. Fire burns, water rots. When things go hard with you, and there comes what is called unhappiness in this world, that may be called *fire;* when things prosper, and a brimming abundance of worldly goods surrounds you, that may be called *water.* See to it that the fire burn you not, and the water rot you not. Stand firm against the fire; you must be baked like a clay vessel put into a furnace to solidify its configuration. The vessel thus set in the fire fears not the water; but the vessel not thus solidified will break up in the water like mud. Be in no hurry to get into the water; pass to the water through fire, that you may be able to pass through the water. Therefore in the Sacraments fire is first applied in the shape of catechism and exorcism. If that is not fire, how is it that the unclean spirits so often cry out, "I burn"?[1] But after the fire of exorcism baptism is reached, from fire to water, from water to refreshment and repose. As in the Sacraments, so is it in the temptations of this world; first comes the pressure of fear, in place of fire; then, when fear is taken away, the danger is to be apprehended of the happiness of this life proving a source of corruption. But when the fire has not broken you up, and entering the water you are not drowned, but swim out, you pass to rest, through fire and water to refreshment; for so things are signified in the Sacraments, those same things which are permanent in the perfection of life everlasting.

[1] A curious experience in African baptisms. St Augustin refers to it as to a thing notorious.

§ 115. *Summer and winter* (Ps. lxvi).

When there was tranquillity of life and the prosperity of this world, when one had leisure and repose and was reckoned by all a happy man, that was summer-time. Then a man should imitate the ant, hear the word of God, gather grains and store them within. There came temptation and tribulation, a chill of fear, a tempest of sadness, some loss of money, some danger of health, some bereavement, some disgrace and humiliation—then was it winter. In winter the ant returns to what she gathered in summer, and in her secret cell within, where no one sees, she is refreshed with the fruit of her summer labours. When she was collecting in summer, all saw her; now that she feeds on her gathered store in winter, none sees her. See the ant of God, how she rises daily, runs to the church, prays, hears the lesson, sings the hymn, ruminates on what she has heard, thinks it over within herself, stores within the grains gathered from the floor. These doings are seen by all, the going to church, the hearing of the sermon, the finding of the book, opening and reading it. There is the ant, reading and re-reading the same truth, carrying and storing in sight of all. Winter comes at last: to whom does it not come? Now within the ant eats the fruits of the summer; but you saw her gathering, you do not see her eating.

§ 116. *Use of similitudes* (Ps. lxvi).

*Our youth shall be renewed like an eagle's* (Ps. cii); only let us crush our old habit and condition on the rock Christ. Whether those stories are true, brethren, which are told of the serpent or eagle, or whether it is folklore (*fama hominum*) rather than truth, still there is truth in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures have said it not without cause. Let us do what the legend signifies, and not trouble our-

selves as to the truth of the legend. Be thou such that thy youth may be enabled to be renewed like an eagle's. And know that it cannot be renewed except by the aid of the Rock, by the aid of Christ. Be thou not lulled by the sweetness of past memories to be deaf to the word of God; be not so held and hampered by present occupations as to say: I have no time to read, no time to hear. That is pressing thine ear to earth.[1] Be thou not such, but quite the contrary, forgetting bygones, stretching thyself out to what is before thee, crushing thy pristine habit and ancient form against the rock. And as for any similitudes that are given thee, if thou findest them stated as facts in Scripture,[2] believe them so; if thou findest them not stated otherwise than on hearsay, put not much faith in them. Perhaps the fact is so, perhaps it is not. Do thou make thine advance, let the similitude serve thee unto salvation. Thou hast no mind to act upon this similitude, then act up to another, provided only that thou dost act; and look with full assurance for the kingdom of God, taking care that thy prayer be not at variance with thyself. when thou sayest, "Thy kingdom come," examine thy conscience. Lo, God answers, "I am coming"; art thou not afraid? We have often said to Your Charity, it is nought to preach the truth, if the heart be at variance with the tongue; it is nought to hear the truth, if no fruit follow upon the hearing. We speak to you from the higher level of this throne; how much we are in fear below your feet, God knows. May he be propitious to the humble, because cries of applause are not so delightful as devotion of confession and deeds of righteousness. And how little delight we take except in your advancement, and how much danger we experience in your praises, may he know

[1] As the serpent was supposed to do against the charmer; see § 91.

[2] St Augustine refers to the historical narratives of the Old Testament, which he is fond of expanding as bearing a figurative sense over and above the historical.

whom we pray to deliver us from all dangers, save us from all temptation, acknowledge us along with you in his kingdom, and vouchsafe to crown us there.

§ 117. *A gleam of prosperity* (Ps. lxviii).[1]

We have been born into this world, and aggregated to the people of God, at a time when that tree, which grew from the mustard seed, has spread its branches wide—when that leaven, which was at first despised, has leavened three measures—that is, the whole world, since from East and West and North and South men are coming who shall sit at table with the Patriarchs, while the Jews, born of their flesh, who have not imitated their faith, are cast out (Matt. xiii 31, 33; Luke xiii 19, 21; Matt. viii 11). Upon this glory of Christ's church we have opened our eyes; and we have found that barren woman, to whom joy was announced and prophesied, because she was to have more children than her that had already a husband (Gal. iv 47)—we have found her, I say, now so blessed, forgetful of the reproaches and ignominy of her widowhood. It may perhaps strike us with surprise to read in any prophecy of the humble and lowly estate of Christ, or of ourselves; and so we may be less affected by the reading, because ourselves we have not come upon the time when such reading was relished and appreciated under the abundance of pressure. Still, we may reflect upon the abundance of present tribulations, and recognise the way in which we walk, if we do walk in it, how strait it is, leading through pressure of many tribulations to everlasting rest; and how what is called happiness in human affairs is more to be dreaded than misery, seeing that misery commonly draws good fruit out of tribulation, while happiness corrupts

[1] This was written about A.D. 420, before the devastation of Africa by the Vandals, ten years afterwards, close upon Augustine's death. It might have been written in 1420, before the Reformation. It could not be written now, 1920.

the soul with misplaced security, and gives an opening to the temptations of the devil. I say, that when we reflect sagely and well that *man's life is a temptation upon earth* (Job vii 1), and that no man at all is secure, or ought to feel secure, till he arrives at that home-country whence no friend goes out, and whither no enemy is let in, even now in the heyday of the Church's glory we shall recognise the cries of our tribulation, and as members of Christ, by the bond of charity subject to our Head and clinging to one another, we shall be ready to recite from the Psalms, what we find here the martyrs have said, who were before us, because tribulation is common to all from beginning to end.

§ 118. *Twofold deliverance* (Ps. lxviii).

*For mine enemies' sake, deliver me.* There is a hidden deliverance of the saints; that is for their sake alone. There is also a public and manifest deliverance; that is for the sake of their enemies, whether their punishment or their improvement. God certainly did not deliver the Machabee brothers from the fire of the persecutor (2 Mach. vii). Their mother, resembling not Eve, but Mother Church, with joy saw them dying whom she had brought forth with pain, and exhorted them to die for the ancestral laws of their Lord God rather than live in violation of them. What are we to believe here, brethren, but that they were delivered? But their deliverance was hidden. Antiochus, the author of their death, thought that he had gained his point. But the Three Children were openly delivered from the fiery furnace (Dan. iii 49); their bodies were rescued, their preservation was public. The former were crowned in secret, the latter were openly set free; but they were all saved. What was the fruit of the deliverance of the Three Children? Why was their crowning put off? Nabuchodonosor himself was converted to their God, and published his praises for delivering his servants, whom he had contemned when he sent them into the furnace.

There is, then, a hidden deliverance and a manifest deliverance. The hidden deliverance regards the soul, the manifest also the body. This being so, we recognise in this psalm the voice of our Lord, *Attend to my soul, and redeem it ;* that utterance points to his hidden deliverance. There remains the deliverance of his Body. At his Resurrection and Ascension and the sending of his Holy Spirit, they were converted to faith in him who had been cruel to him at his death. *For mine enemies' sake*, he says, deliver my Body also; it will profit them nothing, if thou deliverest my Soul alone.

§ 119. *The Book of Life* (Ps. lxviii).

*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.* Why, were they ever written there ? Brethren, we are not to construe this passage as though God writes anyone down in the Book of Life and afterwards blots him out. If man has said, *What I have written, I have written* (John xix 22), are we to suppose that God writes down anyone and blots him out ? He is prescient, he has predestined before the foundation of the world all who are to reign with his Son in life everlasting. Their names he has written; the Book of Life contains them. *And all the inhabitants of the earth shall adore him* (the beast), *they whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world* (Apoc. xiii 8). So then, doubtless they shall not adore whose names are written. How, then, are their names blotted out from where they never were written ? It refers to what in their hope was written, inasmuch as they thought their names written. *Let them be blotted out of the Book of Life* means, " let them find out themselves that they are not there." So Ps. xc, *a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand*, means that many shall be tripped up of the number of those who hoped to sit with thee, and of the number who hoped to stand at thy right hand, separate from the goats on thy left (Matt. xxv 33)—not that when anyone has stood there

he shall afterwards fall, or that when anyone has sat with him, he shall be cast off, but that many shall fall who hoped to sit with thee, many who hoped to stand at thy right hand.[1] *Let them be blotted out* in the frustration of their hope; but in the counsel of thy equity, *let them not be written with the just.*

§ 120. *A man dissatisfied with his Maker* (Ps. lxx).

Lo, thy soul is at war. What soul, and with whom at war? It is thy soul, at war against God; a made soul, against him by whom it was made. By the mere fact of thy existence, and ability to cry out against him, thou art ungrateful. Go back, then, to the confession of thy weakness; implore the hand of thy physician. Think not them happy who flourish for a time. Thou art chastised, they are spared; haply, when thou hast been chastised and amended, the inheritance of a son is in store for thee. *Rebel, enter into thyself* (Isa. xlvi 8). He against whom thou hast declared war is much stronger than thou art. The bigger the stones thou throwest against heaven, the heavier the falling body that will crush thee. Enter into thyself rather, acknowledge thyself. God he is with whom thou art dissatisfied; blush and be dissatisfied with thyself.

§ 121. *Massa damnata* (Ps. lxx).

Thou didst make man, thou didst give him free will, thou didst set him in paradise, thou didst impose a precept, thou didst most justly threaten him with death if he violated the precept; there is nothing that thou didst not do, there is none that could demand more of thee. He sinned; mankind became a lump of sins,[2] a running source of

[1] May we not rather expect that the multitude of goats shall consist of persons who never really cared about standing on Christ's right hand, never were in earnest in this matter of salvation?

[2] Or it may be "lump of sinners," *massa peccatorum*, elsewhere called by Augustine *massa damnata*.

sinners (*profluens de peccatoribus*); what then if thou shouldst damn this lump of iniquity, shall anyone say to thee, thou hast done unjustly ?[1]

§ 122. *Praise God always* (Ps. lxx).

*My mouth shall tell out all day long thy salvation.* There comes a spell of adversity; proclaim the salvation of the Lord. There comes a spell of prosperity; proclaim the salvation of the Lord. Do not proclaim it in prosperity and then be silent in adversity; that is not " all day long." " All day long " carries night with it. Therefore all day long tell out the praise of God, in prosperity as in daytime, in adversity as in night-time. While he still had sons, cattle, servants, all his property, Job praised God: that was in daytime. There came losses and bereavements; what was being kept for his children was lost, they died for whom it was being kept. That was night-time. See him nevertheless praising all day long. *The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord* (Job i 21). This was said at evening-tide; there came on a thicker night, darkness more profound, pain of body, rottenness, worms; not in the very midst of putrefaction did Job fail to praise God in the night.

[1] In these two paragraphs 119, 121, we have a summary of St Augustine's teaching on Predestination, set forth at length in his *De correptione et gratia.* In view of the development of theology since the fifth century, and of the present-day mind of the Church, be it observed, what St Augustine failed clearly to see—that damnation may be—

(*a*) *Natural*, the final privation of all happiness proper to man as man.
(*b*) *Supernatural*, the privation of sanctifying grace and of the vision of God.
(*c*) What Adam's fall entailed on his posterity was (*b*), not (*a*).
(*d*) A man dying in actual mortal sin incurs through his own act both (*b*) and (*a*).
(*e*) No antecedent judgement of the Almighty imposes upon any man, as his inevitable lot, the damnation marked as both (*b*) and (*a*).

§ 123. *End of the praises of David, son of Jesse* (Ps. lxxi, last verse).

In the time of the Old Testament, the promises of our God to that carnal people were temporal and earthly promises, promises of an earthly kingdom, promises of that land into which they were to be led after their deliverance from Egypt. So by Josue they were brought into that land of promise, where also was built the earthly Jerusalem where David reigned. They received the land, they received a kingdom; then, after the reception of the kingdom, they began, as their sins deserved, to be assailed, stormed out, led into captivity: finally their city itself was laid in ruins. Such were those promises, not destined to last, but by them were figured future promises that were to last. All that historical course of temporal promises was a figure and, in a way, a prophecy of things to come. Accordingly, when that kingdom failed where reigned David, son of Jesse—a man, though a prophet and saint, inasmuch as he foresaw Christ to come; a man of whose seed Christ was to be born according to the flesh; still a man, still not yet Christ, still not yet our King, the Son of God, but King David, son of Jesse—well then, since that kingdom was to fail, on the reception of which God was then praised by those carnal men—for this alone they held for a great boon, their temporal deliverance from their oppressors, and their escape from the pursuit of their enemies by the Red Sea, and their guidance through the desert, and their finding of a country and a kingdom; on this sole ground did they praise God, not yet understanding what God was prefiguring and promising under those figures—when, then, those benefits failed for which that carnal people, over whom David reigned, praised God, then there was an *end of the praises of David*, not the Son of God, but the son of Jesse.[1]

[1] In point of form, a characteristic Augustinian period, which I have preserved unbroken in its long continuity. In point of

Now then you see the meaning of the title, *end of the praises of David, the son of Jesse.*

§ 124. *The Red Sea and the Jordan* (Ps. lxxii).

The people are delivered from the Egyptians through Moses; the people are delivered from their past life of sins through Jesus Christ our Lord. That people pass through the Red Sea, this through baptism. In the Red Sea there die all that people's enemies; in baptism all our sins die. Observe, brethren, after the Red Sea there follows not immediately the triumphant possession of the country, but there remains the solitude of the wilderness, there remain enemies lying in wait in the way; so also after baptism there remains Christian life amid temptations. In that wilderness there was sighing after the promised land; what else do Christians sigh after once they are washed in baptism? Do they already reign with Christ? We are not yet come to our land of promise. Let all the faithful hear this and know where they are; they are in the wilderness, sighing after their country. Their enemies are dead in baptism, but only those enemies who were following in their rear. All our past sins were blotted out in baptism;[1] the sins that now tempt us do not follow in the rear, but beset us on the way. Hence the Apostle says: *I forget the things that are behind, and stretch out to the things that are before, to the prize of the heavenly calling of God* (Phil. iii 14), to the country of the heavenly calling of God. Whatever that people suffered in the wilderness and whatever God gave them, all his scourges and all his gifts, are significant of our experiences in the wilderness of this life, as we walk seeking our country, now receiving to our consolation, now suffering to our probation. That people was finally

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matter also, a summary expression of St Augustine's characteristic method of expanding Old Testament history against the attacks of Manichees and others. That history was all prophecy.

[1] How much this must have meant to St Augustine!

brought to the land of promise. Was that a land to last? Had it been so, it would have been no figure, but a reality. It needs must fail them, that by its failing they should be compelled to seek for something that should not fail.

§ 125. *Rich and poor* (Ps. lxxii).

*Labour is before me.* Thou sayest right, labour is before thee, but before God there is no labour; put thyself before God where there is no labour, and neither for thee shall there be labour. And this the psalmist did, for he says, *labour is before me till I enter into the sanctuary of God.* He means to say: I have long been labouring, having before my consideration a difficulty from which there seemed to be no outlet, to know how God is just, and has care for the outgoings of men, and is not unjust in allowing sinners and criminals to have happiness on this earth, while God's pious servants are commonly harassed with trials and troubles. A great difficulty it is to know the answer, but only *until I enter into the sanctuary of God.* And what solution to this question, we may ask, do you find in the sanctuary? There I fix my gaze on the end of all, and overshoot the present. All this mass of humanity is one day to be called to account, to be put in the balance, and their works weighed. All is now clouded over, but to God the merits of individuals are known. Therefore, my brethren, speaking freely from this throne, in the name of Christ and in his fear, I exhort you, whoever of you have not these worldly goods, not to covet them, and whoever of you have them, not to presume on them. See what I have said to you. I do not say you are in a way of damnation, because you have worldly goods; but you are in a way of damnation if you presume on them, if you are vain of them, if you think yourselves great people for having them, if on account of them you have no regard for the poor, if for this fine vanity you forget the common condition of

mankind—for in that case God must needs pay you back in the end, and *in his city bring the image of such people to nought.*

§ 126. *Heaven means God* (Ps. lxxii).

*For what have I in heaven, and away from thee what have I desired on earth?* From the cry you raise I see that you have understood. The psalmist has compared with his earthly desire his heavenly reward; he has seen what was in store for him; and thinking and growing hot on the thought of something ineffable, that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive* (1 Cor. ii 9), he does not say, this or that I have in heaven, but, *what have I in heaven?* What is its essence, what its magnitude and quality? *And*, seeing that which I have in heaven passes not, *away from thee what have I desired upon earth?*—I will speak as I can, but pardon me; accept my endeavour and my devout exertions, for I have no faculty to explain.[1] Thou hast in store for me, he says, in heaven immortal riches, even thine own self; and here I have been desiring of thee on earth what even the wicked have, what criminals have, in the shape of money, gold, silver, jewelry, households of slaves; what many women of evil life have, and many men of evil life; these things have I desired of my God as something great upon earth, when all the while my God is keeping himself for me in heaven. *God of my heart.* This, then, is what is being kept for me in heaven. *God of my heart, and my portion my God.* How stands it, my brethren? Let us make an inventory of our wealth, let mankind choose their side. Let us see men torn by a diversity of cravings; let some choose the army, some the law, some various walks of learning, some business, some farming; let the people of God cry, *my portion my God.* Not for a time my portion, but *my portion*

[1] *Sic dicam ut possum, sed date veniam; accipite conatum meum, devotionem nitendi, nam explicandi nullam facultatem.* So the MSS.

*God for ever*. . . . I forget how long I have been speaking, but from the air of the place (*ex odore*) I guess I have given a long discourse. But I cannot come up to your demands. You are positively violent. God grant that by this violence of yours you may bear away the kingdom of heaven.

§ 127. *Old and New Testament* (Ps. lxxiii).

Seasonably, not by our arrangement but by God's, we have just heard from the Gospel: *The law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ* (John i 17). In the two several Testaments, Old and New, there are not the same sacraments, nor the same promises, but there are for the most part the same commandments. Let us see why there are the same commandments; it is because our service to God is due in these fixed terms.[1] The Sacraments are not the same; because the Sacraments that give salvation are different from those which promise a Saviour. Why look for promises when you already have the Saviour? Not that we have already received life everlasting,[2] but that Christ is already come, who was foretold by the prophets. The Sacraments are changed; they are made easier, fewer, more wholesome, and more fruitful.[3] Why are not the promises the same? Because what was promised was the land of Chanaan, a rich land, a fertile, running with milk and honey; there was promised a temporal kingdom, there was promised the prosperity of this world, there was promised

[1] The commandments belong to the natural law, which is not altered by any supernatural dispensation.

[2] Understand, in its fulness and security. Otherwise, does not our Lord say, *He that believeth in me*—believing, and therefore not yet seeing—*hath life everlasting* (John i 47)? And St Paul: *The grace of God is life everlasting* (Rom. vi 23). St Augustine's notion of predestination gets rather in his way here.

[3] Understand, than the multitudinous religious rites of the old law. Baptism is easier than Circumcision; and even to look at, the *clean oblation* (Mal. i 11) of the Mass compares favourably with a Jewish sacrifice.

an abundant progeny, there was promised the subjection of enemies. All these are points of earthly felicity. But why should they be promised first? *Because the spiritual is not the first in time, but the animal, then the spiritual*, etc. (1 Cor. xv 46-49). The Old Testament belongs to the *image of the earthly*, the New Testament to the *image of the heavenly*.[1] But how long are you going to be an earthly man, minding earthly things? To a child are given childish playthings, to recreate his childish mind. But as he grows up, are they not knocked out of his hands, that he may now handle something more useful, as becomes a grown lad? You yourself gave nuts to your boy when he was a child, and a book when he was grown. We must not then think that, because by the New Testament God had knocked those childish playthings[2] out of the hands of his children to give them something more useful as they grow up, he did not on that account himself give them those former things. He the self-same is the giver of both. Observe finally how all that he promised the Jews is now taken away. Where is their kingdom, their temple, their unction, their priest, where are their prophets? Since the coming of him who was preached by the prophets, nothing of those things has been left to that nation; it has lost the things of earth, and is not yet seeking the things of heaven.

§ 128. *The trial of faith* (Ps. lxxiii).

Let him who can, see that there is a God; let him who cannot see it, believe it. And if he sees it who can, does he see it with his eyes? He sees with his understanding, he sees with his heart. It was not sun and moon that Christ was minded to show us, when he said, *Blessed are the*

[1] But the earthly itself is an image of the heavenly, and so the two Testaments are one, as St Augustine was continually telling the Manichees, and as he goes on to argue here.

[2] *Weak and beggarly elements* (Gal. iii 9).

*clean of heart, for they shall see God* (Matt. v 5). His unclean heart is not suited for faith, to believe what it cannot see. "I do not see," you say, "why am I to believe?" Fool, your body is seen, who sees your soul? If your body is seen, and that is all there is of you, why are you not buried? He answers, for he is shrewd enough here: "Because I am alive." How do I know that you are alive, since I see not your soul? You will answer: "Because I speak, because I walk, because I do things." Fool, from the work of your body I recognise your being alive; and cannot you recognise the Creator from the works of the creature? But perhaps there comes along soon one who says: "When I am dead, then shall I be nothing." He has read books, he has learnt that of Epicurus, a demented fellow of a philosopher, or rather a lover of folly, not of wisdom, whom philosophers themselves termed a swine, because he said that the good of the body was the highest good. Possibly it was from him that this man of books learnt to say: "When I am dead, then I shall be nothing." Away with these teachers of heathendom; let men see what they can; let them believe with the heart what they cannot see. Woe to perverse hearts, because the things that remain to come will come, as surely as those things have come which formerly were not, and were foretold as coming. Do you mean to say that God has fulfilled all other things that he promised us, and has played us false in this matter alone of the day of judgement? That surely will come, even as those other things have come. It will come, my brethren. Let no one say, "It will not come," or, "The coming of it is far off." But the time is near for you to go hence. Let our first deception be enough for us. At least let us be corrected by the example, if we have been unable to abide in the precept. There was as yet no example of the fall of man, when it was said to Adam, *Thou shalt die the death if thou touchest.* But the serpent crossed the path and said,

*Thou shalt not die the death.* The serpent was believed, God was set aside. The serpent was believed, the forbidden thing was touched, man died. Is it not clear that God's threat took effect rather than the serpent's promise? So certainly, we acknowledge that: hence we are all in death: we have learnt caution by experience. Even now the serpent ceases not to whisper and say: "Can it really be that God is going to damn such multitudes, and deliver only a few?"[1] What else is that but to say, "Transgress the commandment, you shall not die"? But as then, so also now. If you do what the devil suggests, and set aside what God has commanded, the day of judgement will come, and you will find God's threats true, and the devil's promises false.[2]

§ 129. *Faith far-sighted* (Ps. lxxiii).

Christ was foretold for to come. He came, and was set at nought by the Jews, walking on earth, as he is still set at naught by false Christians, sitting in heaven. Since I have believed in thee, let me not perish; because I have believed in what I have not seen, let me not be deceived in my hope, but receive what thou hast promised. Christ is still insulted, and *all day long*, that is, to the end of the world, vessels of wrath will not be lacking. Still it is said, "Christian preaching is bunkum, resurrection of the dead bunkum." *Remember the scoffings that are uttered by the imprudent all day long.* Does the prudent speak so? *Prudens* is *porro videns*, far-sighted. By faith we are far-sighted; by our eyes we see little beyond the end of our noses.[3]

[1] The question of the multitude and the few does not enter into the Catholic faith. What is revealed, and what is to be held on faith, is this and this only, that God will damn those who die in mortal sin, and save those who die in his grace.

[2] *Invenies verum quod minatus est Deus, et falsum quod pollicitus est diabolus.*

[3] *Vix ante pedes.* St Augustine read *ab imprudente* for the modern Vulgate *ab insipiente.* "Bunkum, my boy," were actually the last words of a dying uncle to his nephew about the truths of the next world.

§ 130. *Confession* (Ps. lxxiv).

*We will confess to thee, O God, we will confess to thee, and invoke thy name.* Do not invoke before confessing; confess and invoke. If he is invoked by thee, that is, called into thee, to whom does he draw nigh? He draws not nigh to the proud; high as he is, that man attains not to him who is lifted up in pride. He is high, and is reached by the lowly. *The Lord is nigh to the contrite of heart* (Ps. xxxiii). The contrite man is angry with himself, that he may find God propitious; he makes himself his own judge, that he may have God for his defender. Confess, then, and invoke; say, *We will confess to thee, O God, we will confess to thee.* The mere repetition is an encouragement to thee not to repent of having confessed. For thou hast not confessed to a cruel hearer, to an avenger, to an insulter; confess securely. Listen to the invitation of another psalm: *Confess to the Lord, for he is good* (Ps. cv). Why fear to confess? He is good, he pardons him that confesses. Fear to confess to a human judge, lest he punish thee after the confession, but have no such fear in the case of God. Make him propitious by confession, whom thou canst not make ignorant by denial. We have emptied out our consciences by confession; thou hast terrified, thou hast cleansed us. Confession makes us humble; draw nigh to the humble, thou who withdrawest from the lofty spirit. To God thou canst not deny things that he is ignorant of. Thy confession does not teach him anything, but it cleanses thee. He that has confessed has emptied himself of evil things; invoking, he has filled himself with good things. Many are the hearts of them that confess, but one of them that believe. Men confess various sins, but believe in one faith.[1]

[1] Whatsoever the controversial value of this passage, at any rate to a Catholic, who believes in sacramental confession as an institution of our divine Saviour, and therefore as a thing that must have existed in some form in the Africa of the fifth century,

§ 131. *No escaping God* (Ps. lxxiv).

Whither wilt thou betake thyself from the eyes of God, to find some place in which to say what he is not to hear? If God is sitting as judge in the East, retire to the West, and say what thou wilt against God. If in the West, go to the East, and there talk. If his judgement-seat is on the lonely mountains, go to the teeming haunts of men, and there grumble to thyself. His judgement throne is in no one place, who is everywhere in secret, everywhere in public; whom none is permitted to know as he is, and none is permitted to ignore. See what thou art about. Thou utterest iniquity against God. But *the Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole earth, and the containing frame thereof hath knowledge of what is said. Therefore he that speaketh wickedness cannot go unheard* (Wisd. i 7, 8). Think not of God as being in places; he is with thee such as thou art thyself—good, if thou art good, and he will appear evil to thee, if thou art evil; thy aider, if thou art good, and thy punisher, if thou art evil. There thou hast thy Judge in the secret of thy heart. Wishing to do something bad, thou betakest thyself from the public place to thine own house, where none of thine enemies can see thee. From the open and accessible places of thy house thou withdrawest to thine own apartment: even in thine own chamber thou art afraid of someone from elsewhere coming to know; thou retirest into thine own heart, and there thou harbourest thy design—but he is within thy heart. Whithersoever thou fliest, there he is. There is no flying anywhere from God angry but to God appeased. Wouldst thou fly from him? Fly to him. So many pricks of sins, so many make thy points of confession.[1]

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St Augustine's earnest insistence on confession is significant of something more explicit than a private acknowledgement of one's sins before God. Of course he means that, but he means more.

[1] *Quot habes ibi* (*in cordibus vestris*) *punctiones peccatorum, tot habe illic* (*in cubilibus vestris*) *compunctiones confessionum.*

§ 132. *A canon of Scripture interpretation* (Ps. lxxiv).

*All sinners of the earth shall drink.* The passage is obscure; let me explain so far as the Lord gives me to understand. Another may understand it better, because such is the obscurity of these Scripture passages that it is hard to reduce them to one meaning. Whatever meaning comes out, however, it must be in accordance with the rule of faith. We do not envy our elders [in point of erudition], nor little ones though we be, do we despair [of making anything out.] I say to Your Charity what seems likely to us, not that we would stop your ears against others, who perhaps will say the thing better. *All sinners of the earth shall drink.* Who are the sinners of the earth? The Jews were sinners, but proud; the Gentiles were sinners, but humble. All sinners shall drink, but see who drink the lees, and who the wine. The Jews, by drinking the lees, came to no good; the Gentiles, by drinking the wine, were justified. I would dare to say even that they were made drunk; and I will not fear; nay, would that you could all be made so drunk. Remember the text, *The cup that inebriateth me, how goodly it is* (Ps. xxii)! Think you, brethren, that the martyrs who were willing to die in the confession of Christ were all sober? So drunk were they that they did not know their own people. All their kinsmen, who endeavoured by soft blandishments to divert them from the hope of heavenly rewards, went unrecognised and unheard by these drunkards. Were they not drunk, whose heart was changed? Were they not drunk, whose mind was estranged from this world? Sinners shall drink this wine, but not to remain sinners; they shall drink to be justified, not to be punished.[1]

[1] Probably, however, we must seek the interpretation of *All sinners shall drink* in Apoc. xvii 4, 6; xviii 6: *The woman held in her hand a golden cup, full of abominations; and I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints; in the cup that she hath mixed, mix her a double portion.* It means, "they shall drink of the cup of the wrath of God."

§ 133. *True Israelites* (Ps. lxxv; John i 47).

*The sceptre shall not pass from Judah, nor the staff of command from between his feet, till Schilo (the peacemaker) come* (Gen. xlix 10, in the Hebrew). So said Jacob, when he blessed his sons. *And Pilate said to them, shall I crucify your King?* and they: *We have no King but Caesar* (John xix). O ye who *are called Jews and are not* (Apoc. iii 9), if ye have no king but Caesar, the sceptre has now passed from Judah; he therefore has come to whom it was promised. They, then, are more truly Jews who have become Christians from being Jews; other Jews, who have not believed in Christ, have deserved to lose the very name. *In Jewry God is known.* Jewry therefore is the true church of Christ, believing in that King who came of the tribe of Judah through the Virgin Mary, him of whom the Apostle wrote: *Be mindful how Jesus Christ rose from the dead, of the seed of David* (2 Tim. ii 3); for David was of Judah, and of David our Lord Jesus Christ. We believers in Christ belong to Judah, and we know Christ. The Church has become the true Jewry where Christ is known.

§ 134. *The warfare against self* (Ps. lxxv).

War is declared for thee to wage, not only against the devil and his angels, but against thyself, against thy bad habits, thy old evil mode of life. A new life is proclaimed for thee. Thou art light and mirthful with the joy of thy new condition, but still hampered by the heaviness of the old: there sets in for thee a war against thyself. Inasmuch as thou art discontented with thyself, thou art united with God; and inasmuch as thou art united with God, thou wilt be apt to conquer thyself, because he is with thee who overcomes all. Evil suggestions and allurements are not wanting; but inasmuch as in mind thou art united with God, thou art victorious over that element in thee which refuses to follow him. Thou hast gone forward in part, and in

part art hanging back. Draw thyself to him who is bearing thee aloft; in thee and from thyself is thy scourge: let thy quarrel be with thyself. But hold thy members firm against thy evil lusts. Anger has arisen, hold thou thy hand in union with God. The passion has been able to rise, but it has not found arms. It rests with thy anger to make the assault, but the arms are in thy power; let the assault go unarmed, and the enemy in time learns not to rise who has risen in vain. Though there cannot but be fleshly desires, there must be no consenting to them.

§ 135. *The poor man's hand* (Ps. lxxv).

*They have slept their sleep, and all these men of riches have found nothing in their hands.* They have loved the present, and slept on the present, and the present has become delicious to them, as he who dreams that he has found treasures is rich so long as he does not awake. The dream made him rich, the awaking makes him poor. Perhaps he is sleeping upon the earth, and lying upon the hard ground; sleep has bound him, and in his dreams he has beheld himself lying on an ivory couch, with feather-bed, mattresses piled high; while he sleeps, he sleeps well; but waking, he finds himself on the hard bed in which the sleep had come over him. Such are those rich men. They have come into this life, and in the gratification of sensual desires have fallen asleep here; riches and vain fleeting pomps have engrossed them, and passed away: they have never understood what good could be made of those riches. So they have slept on their gratifications, a delightful sleep, but transient; life passes, and they find nothing in their hands, because they have placed nothing in the hand of Christ. Do you wish to find something in your hands afterwards? Do not now despise the poor man's hand. Regard others' empty hands, if you wish to have your own hands full (Matt. xxv 35 *sq.*).

§ 136. *Vows* (Ps. lxxv).

*Vow and pay your vows to the Lord your God.* Be not reluctant to vow, for you will not fulfil your vows of yourselves; you will only fail if you presume on yourselves. Some things we all ought to vow in common[1]—to believe in God, to hope of him life everlasting, to live according to a common standard, that common standard being not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to go to excess in wine, not to be proud, not to kill a man, not to hate a brother, not intentionally to hurt anyone. So much we ought all to vow. There are vows proper to special states. Thus married persons vow not to know man or woman other than their own partner. Others, having had experience of marital intercourse, vow never again to seek or admit of anything of that sort in future; and these have vowed something greater than the former. Others vow virginity itself from their early youth, to have no experience such as the others have had and have abandoned, and these have vowed most of all. Others vow to make their house a place of hospitality to all Christians who resort to it; a great vow is that.[2] Others vow to relinquish all their property for distribution among the poor, and to take up common life in a company of holy men; again a great vow. Whatever each one vows to God, it is an evil thing for him to look back upon it; of such St Paul speaks as *having condemnation because they have departed from their first promises* (1 Tim. v 12), that is, they have vowed and not paid. Let no brother therefore, who is established in a monastery, say: "I am leaving the monastery, because the people in monasteries are not the only people in the way to arrive at the kingdom of heaven, nor can it be said that they who are not in a monastery do not belong to God." The answer to him is: "They have not vowed; you have vowed, and

[1] What are called baptismal vows.
[2] Provided no compensation be asked.

have looked back." *Remember Lot's wife*, the Lord said, threatening the day of judgement (Luke xvii 32; Gen. xix 26). He said it to all. She was delivered from Sodom, and on the way she looked back. Where she looked back, there she remained. She was turned into a statue of salt, that by contemplation of her men may be seasoned, have understanding, not be fools, not look back, lest giving bad example they remain for the seasoning of others.[1]

§ 137. *My little kingdom* (Ps. lxxv).

Terrible are the kings of the earth, but he above all who is a terror to the kings of the earth. Be thou a king of the earth, and God shall be terrible to thee. How, thou askest, shall I be a king of the earth ? Rule earth, and thou shalt be a king of the earth. Do not, then, in any greedy ambition of reigning set before thine eyes broad lands and wide provinces, over which thou wouldst fain spread the glories of thy reign. Rule the earth that thou carriest.[2]

§ 138. *God's best gift, God himself* (Ps. lxxvi).

Many cry to God for the acquisition of riches and the avoidance of pecuniary losses, for the good estate of their kindred, for the permanence of their house, for temporal prosperity, for secular dignity, finally for bodily health itself, which is the patrimony of the poor. For these and the like things many cry to the Lord, scarcely any for the Lord himself. It is easy for a man to desire anything and everything else of God, and not desire God himself, as though the gift could possibly be sweeter than the Giver. Scripture in another place (Ps. xiii) says of such people, *They have not invoked the Lord*, that is, they have not called the Lord into themselves, they have not invited the Lord into their heart, they have been unwilling to be made the

[1] More about vows, *Enarr. in Ps.* lxxxiii, n. 4.
[2] *Terram quam portas rege*, even thine own body.

habitation of the Lord. And what has happened to them in consequence? *They have trembled there where there was no fear.* They have trembled under the apprehension of the loss of present things, because they were not full of him whom they have not invoked.

§ 139. *The night of this life* (Ps. lxxvi).

*I have sought with my hands in the night.* With my hands, that is, with my works. In the night, in this life; for it is night until the day dawns in the bright coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The day is to come after this night, meanwhile in this night let the lamp not be wanting. And this, I may say, is what we are now doing in expounding these psalms. This lamp ought ever to be lit in your houses. For so it is said, *quench not the Spirit, despise not prophecies* (1 Thess. v 19). This our light is called night in comparison with a certain ineffable day; otherwise the life of the faithful is day in comparison with the life of unbelievers. How it is night we show by the testimony of the Apostle Peter: *attending to prophetic utterance as to a light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn and the morning star rise on your hearts* (2 Pet. i 19). But how the present life of the faithful is day in comparison with the life of the impious, Paul shows: *let us cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light; let us walk honestly as in the day* (Rom. xiii 12). So we have night and day: day in comparison with unbelievers, night in comparison with the angels. In this night let us seek God with our hands; let not our works go slack; let us seek God with no empty desire. As we are on the way, let us pay our fare to enable us to arrive.

§ 140. *The eternal years* (Ps. lxxvi).

*I had in mind the eternal years.* What are eternal years? A great thought, calling for a great silence. Far away from the noise of the outer world, far away from all tumult of

human affairs must he rest within who wishes to think of those eternal years. Are the years eternal in which we are, or in which our ancestors were, or in which our posterity shall be? Heaven forbid that they should be accounted eternal. For what of these years remains? Lo, we say in conversation "this year"; and what do we hold of this year but the single day in which we are? The earlier days of this year are now past, and are not held: the later ones are not yet come. We are in one day, and we say "this year"; nay, say "to-day" if you wish to speak of what is present; for of the whole year what do you hold at present? Whatever of it is past, is not now; whatever of it is to come, is not yet; what do you mean by saying "this year"? Correct your speech, and say "to-day." You are right, I will say "to-day." But further observe that to-day the morning hours are now past, the hours to come have not yet come. Say "this instant." What instant?—While I speak in syllables, if I utter two syllables, the second does not sound till the first is passed; nay, in that one syllable, if it has two letters [*e.g.*, *go*], the second letter [*o*] does not sound until the first [*g*] has gone. What, therefore, do we hold of these years? They are changing years; but the eternal years we must think of as years that stand, years that are not spent in coming and going days, years of which the Scripture says to God, *Thou art the self-same, and thy years shall not fail* (Ps. cii).[1]

§ 141. *Latter-day saints of Jewish stock* (Ps. lxxviii).

Hence are Joseph, that *just man* (Matt. i 19), and the Virgin Mary who bore Christ: hence John the Baptist, *the friend of the bridegroom* (John iii 29), and his parents, Zachary and Elizabeth; hence the aged Simeon and the widow Anna, who heard Christ not yet speaking to corporal sense; hence the blessed Apostles; hence

[1] Eternal years are as mathematical axioms—independent of time, they simply *are*.

Nathanael, *in whom there was no guile* (John i 47); hence that other Joseph, *who himself was looking for the kingdom of God* (Luke xxiii 51); hence all that great multitude that went before and followed after the ass on which Christ rode, saying, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, among whom was that gathering of boys, in whose enthusiasm he said was fulfilled the saying, *From the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise* (Matt. xxi 1-16). Hence also they after his resurrection, of whom in one day three thousand and another day five thousand were baptised (Acts ii 41; iv 4),[1] all blended into one soul and one heart by the fire of charity, of whom *none said that anything was his own, but they had all things in common* (*ibid.*, iv 32). Hence the holy deacons, of whom Stephen was crowned with martyrdom before the Apostles (*ibid.*, vi, vii). Hence so many *churches of Jewry that were in Christ* (Gal. i 22), to whom Paul was *unknown by face*, but known by most notorious cruelty—still better known by the most merciful grace of Christ. Hence he was himself, according to the prophecy foretold of him, *a ravening wolf* (Gen. xlix 27),[2] *in the morning carrying off his prey, in the evening dividing the spoil*, that is, first a ravening persecutor unto death, afterwards a preacher feeding men unto life. These were out of that people the inheritance of God.

§ 142. *Just vengeance* (Ps. lxxviii).

While both the righteous man and the wicked man wish God to take vengeance on their enemies, how can they be distinguished from one another except by this, that the righteous man is more desirous of the correction than of the punishment of his enemy; and when he sees vengeance executed upon him by the Lord, he is not delighted at his punishment—because he does not hate him—but at the

[1] More likely, 5,000 in all.
[2] St Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. iii 5).

divine justice—because he loves God.[1] In short, if vengeance overtakes his enemy in this life, he is either glad on his account, if he is corrected, or glad for other people's sake, that they may beware of imitating him. Thus it is on grounds of benevolence,[2] not of malice, that *the righteous man rejoiceth when he seeth vengeance, and washeth his hands in the blood of the sinner* (Ps. lvii), taking thence joy not in another's evil, but an example of divine warning. But if in the world to come he is avenged by the judgement of God, he is pleased with what pleases God, that things should not go well with the wicked, that the impious should not enjoy the rewards of the pious, which would be unjust, and at variance with the rule of truth, which the just man loves. When the Lord exhorted us to love our enemies, he put before us the example of his Father, *who maketh his sun to rise upon good and bad, and raineth upon righteous and unrighteous* (Matt. v 45). Does God for that not correct sinners with temporal rebukes, or not damn them in the end if they are obstinately hardened? So then let our enemy be loved that the justice of the Lord, wherewith he is punished, do not displease us; and so let the justice wherewith he is punished please us that our joy is not in his evil but in our having a good Judge.

§ 143. *Desire and fear* (Ps. lxxix).

*Things burnt by the fire and dug up shall perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*[3] Let us see and understand what are the things burnt with fire and dug up. What did Christ rebuke? Sins; they shall perish at the rebuke of his countenance. Why, then, are sins burnt with fire and

[1] In other words, on public, not on private grounds.
[2] Say, of public spirit.
[3] *Succensa igni et effossa ab increpatione vultus tui peribunt.* It would be nearer the Hebrew if we could read *peribit*, and make *succensa* and *effossa* feminine agreeing with *vinea*. Then the meaning is: "It (the vineyard) is burnt with fire and dug up; it shall perish at the rebuke of thy countenance."

dug up? Two things make all sins in man, desire and fear. Think, examine, question your hearts, search your consciences, see whether sins can be at all otherwise than by either desiring or fearing. A reward is proposed to thee for sinning, that is, something that pleases thee, and thou actest on thy desire. But perhaps thou art not influenced by gifts; thou art terrified by threats, thou actest on thy fear. For instance, someone wishes to corrupt thee to bear false witness. Thou hast looked to God, and said in thy heart: *What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul* (Matt. xvi 26)? I am not induced by reward to lose my soul for a gain of money. He turns to striking fear into thee, he begins to threaten loss, banishment, perhaps slaughter and death. There, then, if desire has not availed, perhaps fear will avail to bring thee to sin. Against fear, let Scripture again come into thy mind: *Fear not them who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul* (Matt. x 28). Whoever wishes to kill thee may do it, so far as thy body goes; he cannot do it to thy soul. Thy soul shall not die, unless thou thyself choosest to kill it. Let another man's iniquity destroy thy flesh, so long as truth preserves thy soul. But if thou goest back upon truth, what more can thy enemy do to thee than thou art doing to thyself? The cruelty of thine enemy may slay thy flesh, but thou by bearing false witness art slaying thy soul (Wisd. i 11). Thus, my brethren, to every good deed love and fear leads up; to every evil deed love and fear leads up. To do well, thou lovest and fearest God; to do ill, thou lovest and fearest the world. Let these two motives be turned to good: thou didst love earth, now love life everlasting; thou didst fear death, now fear hell. Whatever the world promises thee for iniquity, can it give thee as much as God will give thee for righteousness? Whatever the world threaten thee for righteousness, can it do what God does to the unrighteous? Wouldst thou see what God will give, if thou livest right-

eously? *Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive ye the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* Wouldst thou see what he will do to the impious? *Go ye into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels* (Matt. xxv 34, 41). Thou dost well in wishing nothing else than that it should be well with thee. In loving, thou wishest that it should be well with thee; in fearing, thou art unwilling that it should go ill with thee. But thou seekest not good in the region wherein it is to be sought. Thou art in too much of a hurry. Thou wishest to be without want and without trouble; what thou wishest is good, but endure what thou wishest not in order to gain thy wish. What are the sins then burnt with fire and dug up? The sins that come of evil love are burnt with fire; the sins that come of evil fear are dug up.

§ 144. *Perfect and less perfect Christians* (Ps. lxxx; 1 Cor. iii 11-15).

Explain to us, someone says, how they who *build wood, hay, stubble on the foundation perish not, but are saved, yet so as by fire.* An obscure question, but I say what I can briefly. There are men who altogether despise this world, men who take no joy in anything that passes with time, their heart is not in any earthly business, they are holy, chaste, continent, just, possibly even they sell all they have and give to the poor, or possessing they are as not possessing, and *using this world as not using it* (1 Cor. vii 30). There are others[1] who so cling with some affection to the things that are granted to our weakness.[2] This man does not usurp his neighbour's estate, but he so loves his own that he would be distressed at losing it. He does not take away other people's property, but he asks back his own, and goes to law to recover it (*cf.* 1 Cor. vi 7). Such a Christian contends about earthly things more than is

[1] The vast majority of Christians.
[2] And are commonly needed by the same.

befitting one to whom is promised the kingdom of heaven. He does not lift up his whole heart aloft but that some part of it drags on earth. In short, if the trial comes of undergoing martyrdom, they who have Christ for their foundation, and build thereon gold, silver, precious stones, what do they say? *It is good for me to break up and be with Christ* (Phil. i 23). They run with alacrity, feeling little or no sadness, the result of earthly frailty. But they who love their own property and their own houses are grievously disturbed—their hay and stubble and wood burn. Brother, I say, stick to heaven, trample on earth. If thou art the man to do that, thou buildest up nothing but gold, silver and precious stones. But when thou sayest, "I love this property, and fear the losing of it," and loss is imminent, and thou art troubled—it is true that thou dost not prefer it to Christ, for with all thy love for thy property, if it were said to thee, "Wouldst thou have thy property or Christ?" though losing it with sadness, still by preference thou embracest Christ, whom thou hast laid for thy foundation—yea, thou shalt be saved as by fire.[1]

§ 145. *Occupation in heaven* (Ps. lxxxiii).

But here is the naked to be clothed, and here is pilgrimage, and here is crushing out, and here pressure, because here is the winepress. But what is it that the soul desires, what does she crave? Whither is she going? On what is our yearning fixed? Whither is it hurrying us? Here is matter of meditation, for the man placed on earth, placed amid constraints, placed in winepresses, sighing after things promised in heaven, what does he expect to be his occupation there in that bliss to come which he is anticipating by meditation here? *Blessed are they who dwell in*

[1] The fire contemplated is the pain felt in the loss of things of earth. There is no reference to Purgatory here in St Augustine. For its theology, which may easily be pushed to excess, see my *Waters that Go Softly*, pp. 82-86, § 63, ed. 2.

*thy house*. What is the source of their blessedness? What are they to have? What are they to do? All who are called blessed on earth have something and are doing something. Blessed, we say, is this or that man in having so many estates, such a retinue, so much gold and silver; he is called blessed in point of having.[1] Blessed is he in that he has attained so much and such honours, to a proconsulate or a prefecture; he is called blessed in point of doing. Whence, then, are they in heaven to be blessed? What are they to have? What are they to do? What they are to have I have already said: *Blessed are they who dwell in thy house*. If you have your own house, you are poor; if you have the house of God, you are rich. In your own house you will be in fear of robbers; to the house of God, God himself is the wall. *Blessed*, then, *are they who dwell in thy house*. They possess the heavenly Jerusalem without confinement, without distress, without diversity or division of boundaries; all have it, and individually they each have the whole. Great are the riches there. Brother does not press on brother, there is no poverty. What then are they to do there? The parent of all human activity is necessity. Now, brethren, I have said it in brief. Run your minds through any activities you like, and see if aught brings them forth but necessity.[2] Take the notable arts that are reckoned great in aid of others; as the advocacy of counsel at law and the aid of medicine—for they are the actions that excel in this world—take away suitors, and who needs the assistance of counsel? Take away wounds and diseases, and what is there for the physician to cure? All these our actions which are required and performed for the purpose of daily life, come of necessity, such as ploughing, sowing, planting of new vines, navigation. Take away hunger, thirst, nakedness,

[1] *Beatus*, "blessed," meant commonly in classical Latin what we call "well off," "a man of property."

[2] What of the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge sake?

who needs all these things ?[1] I leave out of count wicked and detestable works, enormities, and crimes, such as murders, burglaries, adulteries; them I do not even reckon among human activities. I speak of these occupations lawful and proper; it is nothing but the necessity of our fleshly frailty that brings them forth. Take the good works that are commanded us, such as *break thy bread to the hungry* (Isa. lviii 7). To whom dost thou break it where no man is hungry ? *Bring the needy and harbourless into thy house.* What stranger receivest thou where all are living at home ? What sick dost thou visit where all enjoy unbroken health ? What contentious man dost thou pacify where there is everlasting peace ? What dead dost thou bury where men live for ever ? Therefore thou art like to do none of those lawful and proper works of all men; none again of these specially good works, because those young of the turtle will by this time have flown from the nest. What then ? Thou hast already told what we are to have. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.* Tell also what they are to do, because I do not see there any of those necessities which ordinarily drive me to action. See, necessity brings forth my present speech and argumentation. Will there be in heaven any such argumentation under the idea of teaching the ignorant or reminding the forgetful ? Shall the Gospel be read in that home where the Word of God shall be contemplated as he is in himself ? As the psalmist has told us what we are to have, *blessed are they who dwell in thy house*, let him tell us also what we are to do. *They shall praise thee for ever and ever.* This shall be our whole occupation, *Halleluia* without fail. Think not, brethren, that any satiety will supervene there, because here you cannot hold on long saying Halleluia—it is necessity that diverts you from that joy. And because what is not seen is not so delightful, if in the midst of the stress and frailty of the flesh we still praise with such

[1] St Augustine ignores the fine arts.

alacrity what we merely believe, how shall we praise it when we see it? When this *corruptible body shall have put on incorruption* (1 Cor. xv 54), none will say, "I have stood long,"[1] "I have fasted long," "I have watched long." There shall be great stability there, and the then attained immortality of our body shall be wrapt in the contemplation of God. If the word that we now deal out to you keeps the frailty of our flesh so long standing, what shall that joy do for us? How will it change us? *We shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is* (1 John iii 2). Once we are like him, how shall faintness or distraction be possible? Let our minds be at rest on this point, brethren, the praise of God and love of God will never cloy us. Yes, if thou failest in love, thou wilt fail in praise. But if thy love shall be everlasting, because that Beauty shall be uncloying, be not afraid of being unable to praise what thou shalt always be able to love. This is the life for us to sigh after.

§ 146. *The twofold Christ* (Ps. lxxxv).

No greater gift could God possibly bestow on mankind than the gift of his Word by whom he made all things, constituting him their Head, and conforming them with him as members, so that he should be at once Son of God and Son of Man, one God with the Father, one Man with men. Thus when we address God in prayer we do not separate his Son from him; and when the Body of the Son (the Church) prays, it does not separate itself from its Head; and he himself becomes *the saviour of his Body* (Eph. v 23), our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us; he prays for us as our Priest; he prays in us as our Head; he is prayed to by us as our God. Let us, then, recognise our utterances in him, and his utterances in us. And when anything is said of our Lord Jesus Christ, especially in the prophets,

[1] The congregation then had to stand during the sermon.

that seems to point to an abasement unworthy of God, let us not hesitate to assign those sayings to him who has not hesitated to conform himself with us. It is true that every creature serves him, because by him every creature was made. Wherefore look upon his sublimity and dignity and hear, *In the beginning was the Word*, etc. (John i 1-3), and, on the other hand, hear of him elsewhere in Scripture as groaning, praying, confessing, we hesitate to apply such predicates to him. Fresh from the contemplation of his Godhead, our mind is loth to descend to his humiliation; thinking almost to do him an injury thereby. Let our mind, however, arouse itself, and be awake in its faith, and see that he whom it was contemplating just now *in the form of God*, has also taken *the form of a servant and humbled himself* (Phil. ii 7, 8), and hanging on the Cross has willed to make his own those words of the psalmist, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Ps. xxi 2; Matt. xxvii 46). He is prayed to, therefore, in the form of God; he prays in the form of a servant; there as Creator, here as the created, assuming without change the created nature that he was to change, and making us one man with himself, Head and Body. We pray, then, to him, through him, in him: we speak with him, and he speaks with us: we speak in him, he speaks in us the prayer of this psalm, which is entitled *A prayer of David*, because our Lord according to the flesh is the son of David, while according to his Godhead he is the Lord of David (Matt. xxii 41-45), and *is* not only before David, but before Abraham (John viii 58), of whom was David; yea, even before Adam, of whom are all men; yea, even before heaven and earth, wherein every creature is contained. Let none then, when he hears the words of this psalm, say, "It is not Christ that speaks," or again, "It is not I that speak." Nay, if he recognises himself in the Body of Christ, let him say both "Christ speaks and I speak." Certainly it is written in the Gospel, *In the beginning was the Word*, etc., but also

*Jesus wept* (John xi 35), and *Jesus was weary* (John iv 6), and *Jesus slept* (Matt. viii 24), and *Jesus hungered and thirsted* (Mark xi 12; John xix 28), and *Jesus spent the night in prayer* (Luke vi 12). He held on in prayer, and drops of blood ran down over his body (Luke xxii 44). What did he there, when the drops of blood trickled down over his body in prayer, but this, that his Body, which is the Church, was already bedewed with the blood of martyrs (*Martyrum sanguine jam fluebat*)?[1]

§ 147. *Rich, not proud* (Ps. lxxxv).

When I say that God does not incline his ear to the rich, do not understand me to mean that God does not hear the prayers of men who have gold and silver, servants and estates, if only they are mindful of the Apostle's words, *Bid the rich of this world not to be proud* (1 Tim. vi 17). Them who are not proud, God counts as poor, and in inclining his ear to the poor and needy, he inclines it also to them. Such rich men know that their hope is not in gold or silver, nor in the things wherein they seem to abound for a time. Enough that their riches are not their ruin; enough that they are no hindrance, for they can do them no good.[2] Certainly a work of mercy does good, both in the rich and in the poor: in the rich by will and work conjoined, in the poor by will alone. When such are the rich man's dispositions, and he despises in himself all that there is to

[1] Our Lord speaks some things as God, some things as Man. What he speaks as Man, we can say with him, as St Augustine sets forth (*cf.* Rom. vi 4, 11; Eph. ii 5, 6). But what he speaks as God we can nowise say, because our humanity, unlike his, is not hypostatically united with Godhead.

[2] *Ut non obsint sat est, nam prodesse nihil possunt.* But surely riches do good to the man who does good with his riches. What a blessing one good rich man is to a parish, and ten good rich men to a diocese! See our Lord's own words (Luke xvi 9). St Augustine is apt to undervalue the natural order, and argue as though nothing were good but grace. The goods of nature are the raw material for grace to work upon.

puff him up with pride, then is he God's poor man: God inclines his ear to him, for he knows that his heart is contrite. Was it by the mere merit of want that the poor man in the Gospel (Luke xvi 20) was carried off by the angels, while the rich man was sent into torments for the mere sin of his riches? No, in that poor man we must understand that humility is honoured, while in that rich man pride is condemned. A short proof that not riches but pride was what was tormented in that rich man is the following: the poor man was carried off to Abraham's bosom; now of Abraham himself it is related that he had much gold and silver, and was a rich man on earth (Gen. xiii 2). If a man is hurried off to torments for being rich, how is it that Abraham had gone before the poor man, to receive him when he was carried off into his bosom? But in the midst of riches Abraham was poor, humble, in awe of all the commandments and obedient to them. So far did he count those riches for nothing, that at the bidding of the Lord he was ready to immolate his son, for whom he was reserving his wealth (Gen. xxii). Learn, then, to be needy and poor, whether ye have anything in this world or have it not. You may find a beggar-man, and a man of affluence, both making humble acknowledgement. *God resisteth the proud* (Jas. iv 6), be they in silks or be they in rags, *and giveth grace to the humble*, whether they have any substance of this world or have none. God looks within a man, there he weighs, there he examines: God's balance thou seest not, thy very thought is put therein. Take care not to be otherwise than needy and poor; if thou art otherwise, thou shalt not be heard. Whatever there is about thee, or in thee, that might be matter of presumption, cast it away; let God be all that thou presumest on; be his poor and needy one, that thou mayest be filled with him. For whatever else thou hast away from him, all the more blank thy emptiness [*latius inanis es*].

§ 148. *Sanctity, our own, infused through the merits of Christ* (Ps. lxxxv; *cf.* Council of Trent, sess. vi, cap. 16, can. 32).

*Guard my soul because I am holy.* When I hear *I am holy*, I recognise Christ's voice, and shall I dare to separate my own from his? Surely, in speaking so, he speaks inseparably from his Body. I then will dare to say, *because I am holy*. If I were to call myself holy as a source of holiness, in no way needing to receive holiness, I should be a proud man and a liar; but if I say so as one made holy, then let Christ's Body say with its Head—let that one man crying from the ends of the earth say with his Head, and under his Head, *because I am holy;* for he has received the grace of holiness, the grace of baptism and forgiveness of sins. *And these things ye were*, says the Apostle, enumerating many sins light and grave, sins ordinary and sins horrible; *and these things ye were, but ye are washed, but ye are hallowed* (1 Cor. vi 11). If he calls them hallowed, let each of the faithful also say, *I am holy*. That is not the vaunting of pride, but the acknowledgement of one not ungrateful. *What hast thou that thou hast not received?* (1 Cor. iv 7). Nay, own at once that thou hast, and that of thyself thou hast nothing, that thou mayest be neither proud nor ungrateful. *As many of you as are baptised in Christ, have put on Christ* (Gal. iii 27). If they are made members of Christ, and say that they are not holy, they are doing an injury to their Head, whose members are not other than holy. Do look where thou art, and take thy dignity from thy Head.

§ 149. *A cry continual* (Ps. lxxxv).

*To thee have I cried all day long.* All day long, all time, ever since the mystical Body of Christ began to groan under distresses until the end of the world, when distresses pass away, this man groans and cries to God, and

each one of us all through this Body takes his part in this crying. Thou didst cry in thy days, and thy days have passed; another has succeeded thee and cried in his days, thou here, he there, this man elsewhere; the Body of Christ cries all day long, its members retiring and succeeding one another. One function is prolonged to the end of the world. Thus ever do the members of Christ cry, while some members already rest in him, some are crying now, some shall cry when we have gone to our rest, and after them others shall cry. The psalmist here notes the voice of the whole Body of Christ. Meanwhile, our Head intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father (Rom. viii 35). Some members he is receiving, others cleansing, others consoling, others creating, others calling, others recalling, others correcting, others renewing.[1]

§ 150. *Distractions in prayer* (Ps. lxxxv).

Truly, my brethren—I will speak as a man among men and of men—let each one study his own conscience and view himself without flattery, attend and see what goes on in the human heart, how our very prayers generally are hampered by idle thoughts, so that our heart is scarcely ever fixed on God. It wishes to hold itself in and be fixed, and yet somehow it runs away from itself, and finds no manner of fence wherein to enclose itself, nor barriers to restrain its wanderings. Among many prayers there hardly occurs one of fixed delight in God. Each might say that this was his own private experience, and happened not to another, did we not find David praying and saying, *I have found my heart to pray to thee* (2 Kings [Sam.] vii 27). He says he has found his heart, as though his heart were wont to fly from him, and he to chase the fugitive, and not be able to catch it, and so he cries to God, *my heart hath*

[1] In particular, the cry of holy Mass and the Divine Office, and the succession of those who say it.

*abandoned me* (Ps. xxxix).[1] Accordingly, brethren, attending to what the psalmist says, *Thou art sweet and mild*, methinks I see that he calls God *mild* to this effect, because he suffers those follies of ours, and still expects of us prayer that he may perfect us; and when we give it to him, he takes it kindly and hears us, remembering not the many prayers that we pour out at random, but rather receiving that one which we have hardly found heart to make. Where is the man, my brethren, who would endure a friend beginning to speak with him, and he being ready to answer his speech, and then the man turning away and talking about something else or to some other person? Or supposing you appeal to a judge, and arrange a meeting for him to hear you, and suddenly, while speaking to him, you cut him and begin chattering to a friend, what judge will brook that? And yet God brooks so many hearts praying and thinking of different things—not to say noxious things, perverse things, and things hateful to God; the mere thinking of those irrelevant things is an injury to him with whom you had begun to speak. Your prayer is a speaking to God. When you read, God speaks to you; when you pray, you speak to God. Are we, then, to despair of mankind, and say that every man incurs damnation, even when some thought creeps at prayer and interrupts his prayer? If we are to say that, brethren, I see no hope left for us. But because we have hope in God, and his mercy is great, let us say, *To thee, Lord, have I lifted up my soul.* And how have I lifted it up? As best I could, as thou hast given me strength, in such measure as I was able to overtake it and catch it on its flight.

§ 151. *Prayer going unanswered* (Ps. lxxxv).

Do not say, "He did not give me that." Return to thy own conscience, weigh, interrogate, spare it not. If thou hast truly invoked God, be sure that what perchance thou

[1] *Found my heart* probably means *have plucked up my courage.*

didst wish in the temporal order he has not given thee, because it was inexpedient for thee. Let this principle be firmly fixed in your heart, brethren, your Christian heart, your faithful heart; be not surly and break out into indignation against God as though you had been cheated of your desires. It is not wise to kick against the goad. Recur to the Scriptures. The devil is heard, and the apostle is not heard. The devils asked to go into the swine, and it was granted them (Matt. viii 32). The devil asked to have Job given over to him to be tempted, and he got him (Job i 12). The Apostle says: *Thrice I besought the Lord to take it* [the thorn in the flesh] *away from me, and he said to me, My grace is sufficient for thee* (2 Cor. xii 8, 9). He heard the one, whom he was preparing to damn, and heard not the other, whom he willed to heal. So the sick man asks many things of the doctor, the doctor gives them not, he stops his ears to the patient's desire that he may open them to the patient's recovery. Therefore consider God your physician, ask of him health and salvation, and he himself will be your salvation, as you have in the psalm, *Say to my soul, I am thy salvation* (Ps. xxxiv). What is it to thee what he gives thee, provided he gives thee himself? What if he will not give thee the thing thou wishest to have, in order that he may give thee himself? He is removing obstacles to make his entrance into thee. Consider, brethren, the good things that God gives to sinners, and hence understand what he reserves for his servants. To sinners who blaspheme him daily he gives earth and sky, he gives springs of water, fruits, health, children, wealth, abundance; all these good things none gives but God. What, think you, reserves he for his faithful, who gives such gifts to sinners? Are we to think so ill of him as to suppose that, giving such gifts to the wicked, he has nothing in store for the good? Nay, he has something in store for them, not earth, but heaven—yea, himself, who made heaven. Wait for thy salvation with

patience. He knows with what medical appliances to heal thee; with what cuttings, with what burnings, he knows. Seest thou not how much men suffer at the hands of surgeons, on a man's promise of uncertain hope? "You'll get all right," says the surgeon, "all right, if I operate." So says a man to a man: neither speaker is sure of what is said nor hearer, because he speaks to man who has not made man, and does not perfectly know what goes on in man. And yet in the words of a man, who for the most part does not know what is going on in man, man believes, yields up his members, allows himself to be tied, or very often is cut or burnt without being tied, and so haply has recovered health for a few days, after his cure not knowing when he is to die; or perhaps he dies under the operation, or perhaps any operation is impossible. But to whom did God ever promise and fail to perform?

§ 152. *Nothing short of God will do* (Ps. lxxxv).

Supposing God were to say to us from heaven: "Thou shalt be everlasting in these worldly goods, they shall stay with thee for ever, but my Face thou shalt not see." Let none consult the flesh, but consult the spirit: let your heart answer, let hope answer and faith, and the charity that has begun to be in you. Well then, if we had an assurance that we should always be in abundant enjoyment of worldly good things, and God were to say to us, "You shall not see my Face," should we rejoice in those good things? Conceivably one might elect to rejoice, and say, "I have abundance of these good things, it is well with me, I seek nothing further." Such a one has not yet become a lover of God, he has not yet begun to sigh as a pilgrim. Far be it from us, far be it from us. Let all those charms recede, let false flatteries recede, let that world recede which says to us daily, *Where is thy God?* (Ps. xli). Let us pour out our heart, let us confess in prayer, let us groan in our confes-

sions, let us sigh in our miseries. It is not sweet, whatever comes to us beside our God. We will not take all that he has given, if he does not give himself who has given all.[1]

§ 153. *Not yet full joy* (Ps. lxxxv).

*Let my heart rejoice to fear thy name.* Not yet in full security, nor perfect rejoicing. Where there is no joy, we lose heart; where there is full security, we exult to ill effect. Therefore the psalm: *Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice before him with trembling* (Ps. ii), and the Apostle: *With fear and trembling work out your salvation* (Phil. ii 12). Brethren, the events that you take for prosperity are rather temptations. An inheritance comes in, and thereupon a plentiful supply of worldly goods, felicity of a certain sort in abundance; these are temptations, take care that they do not spoil you. True matter of rejoicing is prosperity according to Christ and akin to the charity of Christ—as if you succeed in winning over your wife, who belonged to the party of Donatus [C. of E.]; if your sons, who were pagans, have come to be believers; if some opponent and enemy of yours, once a pourer out of rabid invective, has laid aside his rage, become meek, and recognised God, and barks at you no more—these are things to rejoice at. What are we to rejoice at except at such things? What other joys have we but these? But because there is abundance also of tribulations, temptations, dissensions and schisms, and like evils from which this world cannot be free, till iniquity passes away, this exultation should not

[1] "Suppose no God, and man immortal, he would be his own eternal torment. . . . Tired out, sated, the same dishes daily . . . oh, the awful misery of a man living an eternity in this world! . . . Suppose at the judgement God, without positive infliction, merely left a man to himself. . . . The immortal soul, how tired it would get of everything in eternity except of something which is infinite. . . . How soon we get tired of sight-seeing! We long to go home. Home, that is it; what is our home? God and the love of God" (Newman, *Sermon Notes*, pp. 28-9, 161-2, 207).

make us careless; our heart in its joy should fear the name of the Lord, lest joy from one quarter be countered by afflictions from another.

§ 154. *A melancholy psalm* (Ps. lxxxvii).

It was by no necessity of his condition, but by the good will of his compassion, that our Lord Jesus took up these feelings of human weakness, as he also took the flesh of human weakness and the death of human flesh. He did it to transform into himself his Body, the Church, whereof he has deigned to be the Head, that if ever it happened to any of his holy and faithful ones to be saddened and sorrowful in the midst of human temptations, he should not on that account fancy himself estranged from the grace of his Saviour, and should learn that such occurrences are not sins, but indications of human infirmity. Thus the Body was to take the note from the Head. In the case of one leading member of this Body, the Apostle Paul, we read and hear of him confessing that there was great sorrow in his heart and continual grief for his brethren according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Rom. ix 12). If we say that our Lord also was *saddened* on their account (Matt. xxvi 37) when his Passion was approaching, in which they were about to involve themselves in the guilt of a monstrous crime, I think we speak not wide of the mark.

§ 155. *Full moon in the resurrection* (Ps. lxxxviii).

*As the sun in my sight, and the moon full everlastingly, a faithful witness in heaven.* The Scriptures are wont to understand by the moon the mortality of this flesh, for its waxings and wanings and transient show. This flesh, then, is like the moon, which at every season and in every month is undergoing increase and decrease; but this our flesh shall be *full* in the resurrection, and *a faithful witness in heaven.* Thus, if our perfect state were in the soul alone, the psalmist would liken us only to the sun; again, if our

perfection were in the body alone, he would compare us only to the moon; but because God will make us perfect both in soul and body, it is said, *as the sun, and as the moon, perfect for ever* in the resurrection of the dead. On no point is the Christian revelation so contradicted as on this of the resurrection of the body.[1] He who was born for *a sign to be contradicted* (Luke ii 34) raised his own body to life to meet the contradictor. He who could have so healed his limbs as that no trace of wounds should appear there, chose to keep the scars on his body to heal the wound of doubt in our hearts. On no point then, as I was saying, is the Christian faith contradicted with such fierce obstinacy and earnest contention as on the point of the resurrection of the body. Many Gentile philosophers have argued at length on the immortality of the soul, and bequeathed to posterity many books in support of that opinion, but coming to the resurrection of the body they do not hesitate, but openly contradict, and their contradiction takes this form: they say it is a downright impossibility for an earthly body to mount up to heaven. Therefore is this our *moon full everlastingly* and against all contradictors *a faithful witness in heaven.*

§ 156. *Triumph of Christianity in fifth century* (Ps. lxxxviii).

*Remember what my substance is.* David says this, a man in body set among the Jews, but in hope set in Christ. Not because the Jews have fallen away, he says, has my substance fallen away. Of that people was the Virgin Mary, of the Virgin Mary the flesh of Christ; and that flesh was not sinful, but the cleanser of sinners. There is my substance. The root has not altogether perished; there shall come *the seed to whom the promise was made* (Gen. iii 19). *Hast thou in vain created all the sons of men?*

[1] To this day, the birth of Christ of Mary ever-Virgin, and the resurrection of his Body and of ours, are the two miracles above all others that the impugners of miracles deny.

Lo, all the sons of men have gone into vanity; thou, however, hast not created them in vain. Hast thou reserved to thyself no means whereby to deliver them from vanity? what thou hast reserved to thyself for that purpose is thy Holy One in my substance. By him are cleansed all whom thou hast not created in vain. Now we recognise Christ, the cleanser; now we hold him in whom thou fulfillest thy promises; show forth in him what thou hast promised. It is he who shall live and not see death; he it is who rescues my soul from the power of hell, and still we are in distress. So the martyrs said, whose birthdays we keep. While he was already living, already seated at the right hand of the Father, reproaches were hurled against the Christians: to Christians it was long a crime to confess Christ.[1] Long did Christians *keep these reproaches*[2] *in their bosom*, and dared not withstand their scoffers. But whereas before it was recognised a crime to answer a pagan back, now it is a crime to remain a pagan.[3] Thanks to the Lord, he has been *mindful of our reproaches*, he has exalted the horn of his Christ, he has made him wonderful before the kings of the earth. Now no one insults Christians, or if he does insult them, he does not do it in public: he is more afraid of his utterance being heard, than desirous of its being believed. Assured, then, of the promises of Christ, let us believe the past, acknowledge the present, and hope for the future.

§ 157. *Mother Church* (Ps. lxxxviii).

Let us love the Lord our God, let us love his Church, the former as our Father, the latter as our Mother; the former as Lord, the latter as his handmaid, for we are *sons of his handmaid* (Ps. cxv). But this nuptial union (between Christ and his Church) is knit together with great charity. No man offends the one and wins the good graces of the

[1] Or the Pope, his Vicar. [2] Popery, Papist.
[3] Or, in Anglican circles, a Protestant.

other. Let none say: " I resort to idols, I consult mediums [*arreptitios*] and fortune-tellers, but still I do not leave the Church of God, I am a Catholic." Holding on to the Mother, thou hast offended the Father. Another says: " Far be such things from me, I consult no fortune-teller, I look out for no medium, I seek no sacrilegious divinations, I go not to adore demons, I serve no stones—but I do belong to the party of Donatus " [C. of E.]. What does it profit thee not to have offended the Father, seeing that the Father punishes thy offence against the Mother ? What does it profit thee if thou confessest the Lord, honourest God, acknowledgest his Son, confessest him sitting at the right hand of the Father, and all the while blasphemest his Church ? Art thou not corrected by the examples of conjugal love among mankind ? If thou hadst a patron to whom thou didst pay daily court, wearing out his threshold with thy services, daily saluting, nay, even prostrating thyself before him, wouldst thou dare enter his house if thou madest so much as one charge against his wife ? Hold on then, dearly beloved, hold on with one mind to God the Father and Mother Church.

§ 158. *Antichristianity among Christians* (Ps. xc).

A Christian hears rough words among pagans, and if thereupon he is overcome by human respect, he falls into the snare of the hunters. So among Christians, they who wish to be more diligent and virtuous are likely to hear insulting words even from their Christian brethren. And what does it profit thee, brother, that at last thou findest a city in which there is no pagan ? No one there insults a Christian because he is a Christian, but there are many Christians of evil life, and anyone who wishes to live well among them, to be sober among drunkards, and chaste among fornicators, and to worship God sincerely among folk who consult astrologers, and among spectators at

theatrical triflings, to refuse to go anywhere except to church—such a one has even Christians for his insulters, and suffers harsh words. People say: "You *are* a great man, you are an Elias, you are a Peter, and have come from heaven." So they insult him; whichever way he turns, he hears on this side and on that some rough word. If he gets frightened, and leaves the way of Christ, he falls into the nets of the hunters. But how not leave the way at hearing such words? Let him say: What of these words that I hear said to me, a servant, a sinner? My Lord had said to him, *Thou hast a devil* (John viii 48). You have heard the rough word said against our Lord. The Lord had no need to have that said to him; he meant it for a warning to you against rough words, not to fall into the nets of the hunters.

§ 159. *The noonday devil of fierce persecution* (Ps. xc).

We do right in understanding here by *noonday devil* a fierce persecution. Let me relate, brethren, what manner of persecution that at one time was, whence the Lord has delivered his Church. Thinking to banish from the earth the name of Christ and the name of Christians, the emperors and kings of this world began by ordering that anyone who professed himself a Christian should be beheaded. Whoever had no mind to be beheaded, and so denied his being a Christian, knowing what evil he was doing; *the arrow flying by day* reached him. But whoever had no care for this present life, but a sure and certain hope of the future, escaped the arrow flying by day, confessed himself a Christian, was struck in body and delivered in soul. Gathered to rest with God, he awaited the redemption of his body in the resurrection of the dead. He came safe out of the temptation of the arrow flying by day. Not yet was come the noonday devil, flaming with fierce persecution and making it hot even for the strong. Listen to what

ensued. When the enemy saw that many were hastening to martyrdom, and that the more suffered, the more believed in Christ, they said within themselves: " We are in a way of putting to death the human race, so many thousands there are that believe in this name; if we kill them all, there will hardly be anyone left on earth." The sun's rays began to beat: things were getting hot. Listen to their next proclamation: " Whoever confesses himself to be a Christian, let him be tortured, and so long tortured until he denies his being a Christian." Compare the arrow flying by day with the noonday devil. What was the arrow flying by day? " Whoever confesses himself a Christian, let him be beheaded." Any faithful man might avoid that arrow by a speedy death. But, " If he confesses himself a Christian, let him not be put to death, but tortured until he deny it; if he deny it, let him be let go "—there was the noonday devil. Many, then, who at first did not deny, failed under torture: they were tortured and tortured till they did deny. Who was to be found to hold out against such atrocious and prolonged tortures? Many failed, and, I fancy, *they* failed who presumed on themselves, who did not *dwell in the aid of the Most High, and the protection of the God of heaven ;* who did not *say to the Lord, thou art my rescuer*, who did not *hope under the shadow of his wings*, but rested too much on their own strength. They were cast down by God to show them how true it is that he watches over, he tempers temptations, he allows so much temptation to come as he can bear to whom it comes.[1]

[1] St Augustine does not say here, they gave way who were not predestined, but, they gave way who were not humble.

The Japanese Government have recently published their account of the persecutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the constancy of the first victims the record quaintly remarks: " This was because more scientific methods (of torture) were not yet invented." These more scientific methods undoubtedly were not without their success.

§ 160. *The whole scheme of Christianity, Christ and his Church* (Ps. xc).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is as one whole perfect man, both head and body. The Head we recognise in that Man who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was buried, rose again, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, whence we expect him as judge of the quick and the dead; this is the Head of the Church. The Body of this Head is the Church, not the Church in this place alone, but in this place and all over the earth; not the Church that is at this time alone, but the Church that has been from Abel even on to those that are to be born at the end and to believe in Christ, the whole people of the saints belonging to one city, which city is the Body of Christ, to which Christ is the Head. There also are the angels, our fellow-citizens. But because we are pilgrims, we toil; they in the city await our arrival. From that city, whence we are abroad, letters have come to us: they are the Scriptures, which exhort us to live well. Why do I say letters have come? the King himself has come down, and has become our way in our pilgrimage, that walking in him we may not go astray, nor faint, nor fall among robbers, nor stumble into the nets that are laid along the track. Such is the Christ that we know, the whole and universal Christ along with the Church. Another way we know him alone by himself, born of the Virgin, Head of the Church. Mediator between God and Man, he is our Head, he is God, equal to the Father, the Word of God by whom all things were made; but God he was to create, Man to recreate; God to make, Man to remake. He is far above the heavens, but has his feet upon earth. The Head is in heaven, the Body on earth. When his feet were being scourged and stamped upon by Saul, the Word cried: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* (Acts ix 4). Lo, there is now no persecuting of the Head; lo, the Head is

in heaven; because *Christ rising from the dead dieth now no more* (Rom. vi 9); *evil shall not approach thee, and the scourge shall not come near thy dwelling;* but that we might not think that the Head is separate from the Body—there is a separation of place, but a union of affection—that very union of affection cried from heaven: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* He threw him down with a voice of reproof, and raised him with a right hand of pity. He who was persecuting the Body of Christ became a member of Christ, that what he was doing, himself should there come to suffer.

§ 161. *Faith, hope and charity* (Ps. xci).

God teaches no other song than that of faith, hope and charity, that our faith may be firm in him, while we do not see him, believing in him whom we do not see, that we may rejoice when we come to see. This our faith is to be succeeded by the appearance of that light, wherein it will no longer be said to us, " Believe in what you do not see," but, " Rejoice in what you do see." Let our hope also be unchangingly fastened on him, not unsteady and wavering, not shaken, as the God in whom it is fixed cannot be shaken. It is now called hope; then it shall be hope no longer, but realisation (*non spes, sed res*). It is called hope so long as the thing hoped for is not seen: *but the hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopeth for what he seeth? But if we hope for what we do not see, we expect in patience* (Rom. viii 24-5). None is patient under good things; when patience is required of a man, he is undergoing evil things. Be patient, bear, endure; it is a trouble under which God wishes thee to be brave, enduring, long-suffering, patient. There are many evils in this world, within, without, absolutely they never cease; scandals abound, none feels them but he who is walking the way of God. To him it is bidden in every page of Scripture to endure the present, hope for the future, love One whom he sees not, that he may

embrace him when he does see him. For charity is greater than faith and hope; faith is of things unseen, but it shall be vision when they are seen; hope again is of an object not attained; when the reality sets in, there will be no more hope, for we shall grasp it, not hope for it: but charity knows no end but to increase more and more. For if we now love One whom we see not, how much shall we love him when we do see him? Let then our desire grow. We are not Christians but for the world to come.[1] Let none hope for good things in the present, let none promise himself this world's prosperity on the score of his being a Christian; but let him use such present prosperity as he can, when he can. When it is there, let him return thanks for the consolation of God; when it is not there, let him return thanks for the justice of God. Everywhere let him be grateful, never ungrateful—grateful to the Father consoling and soothing, grateful to the Father scourging and giving discipline, for he is ever a loving God alike in his caresses and in his threats.

§ 162. *Shifting the blame* (Ps. xci).

Wrong-headed men attribute their evil deeds to God, and their good deeds to themselves. If a man has done any good, he says, "I did that": if he has done any evil, he looks for someone to throw the blame on, that he may not make humble confession to God. If he is not very impious, he has at his elbow Satan to accuse. "Satan did it," quoth he, "he persuaded me," as though Satan had the power of compelling. All that he has is cunning of persuasion. Now if Satan were to speak and God be silent, you would have some ground of excuse; as it is, your ears are placed between God warning and the serpent suggesting. Why are they turned this way and turned

[1] *Christiani non sumus nisi propter futurum saeculum*, a leading point of Augustinian teaching. No world to come, no Christian Church. *Cf.* Newman, *Anglican Difficulties*, Lecture viii.

away from that? Satan ceases not to suggest evil, but neither does God cease to inculcate good. Satan cannot force any man against his will: it is in your power to consent or not to consent. If you have done any evil, at the instigation of Satan, leave Satan alone and accuse yourself, that thereby you may deserve God's mercy. Do you seek to accuse him who is not open to pardon? Accuse yourself, and you receive forgiveness. Then there are many who do not accuse Satan, but accuse fate. "My fate led me." How came you to do it? "By my evil fate." Rather than say, "I did it," he raises up his hands to God in protest, while he blasphemes with his tongue. He does not utter open blasphemy, but mark and see that still he does blaspheme. You ask him what is fate, and he says, "Evil stars." You ask him who made and arranged the stars, and he can only answer, "God." It remains, then, that either remotely or proximately he accuses God, and makes God the author of his sins.[1]

§ 163. *My glory is nothing* (John viii 54; Ps. xci).

Then shalt thou strike the chords to the name of the most High God, seeking the glory of God, not thine own; his name, not thine. For if thou seekest the name of God, he also seeks thy name; but if thou neglectest the name of God, he blots out thy name. *Rejoice that your names are written in heaven* (Luke x 20). There is where you have your name, if you neglect not the name of God.

[1] Read *sive per transennam sive per cannam longam, sive per proximum sive per remotum.* The latter six words are an explanation of the former six. *Per transennam* is literally, "through the lattice work." In Cicero, *De Oratore* I, 38, *per transennam pertranseuntes aspeximus*, "we looked through the lattice work as we passed by," means "we took a cursory glance." *Per cannam longam* I have not seen elsewhere. It seems to mean "by the long rail" of a fence, in opposition to *per transennam*, "through the palings." The former is "the long way round," the latter, "the short cut," as every schoolboy, who has wriggled through the palings, knows.

Strike the chords, then, to the name of God. A psaltery is a stringed instrument (played with the hands). Our work is our psaltery. Whoever works good works with his hands, strikes the chords to the honour of God. Whoever confesses God with his mouth, sings to God. Sing with mouth, strike the chords with works.[1] To what end? *To tell forth thy mercy in the morning, and thy truth all night long.* The morning is when things go well with us, the night when the sadness of tribulation is upon us. When things go well with thee, praise his mercy, rejoice in God because it is his mercy; when things go ill, praise his truth, because it scourges sins. Accuse not God when thou sufferest some evil, but attribute it to thy sins and to his correction.

§ 164. *Conjoin yourself with the eternal* (Ps. xci).

*Exceeding deep are thy thoughts.* Truly, my brethren, no sea is so deep as this thought of God, how bad men flourish and the good are in trouble; nothing so deep, nothing so high; there every unbeliever suffers shipwreck in that height and in that depth. Do you wish to get over this deep? Never leave go of the cross of Christ, and you shall not be drowned: hold hard by Christ. You have heard the prophecy read how he turned not his shoulders from the scourges nor his face from the spittle, nor his cheek from the smiter. Why did he will to suffer all that, except for the comfort of sufferers? Suffer, then, and endure tribulations in the world for the same end that you have marked in Christ, and be not disturbed at the case of those people who do evil and yet flourish in this world. God holds the reins loose at present, but he will tighten them afterwards. Do not rejoice at the fish who is enjoying the bait that he has swallowed—the fisherman has not yet pulled the hook—for he has the hook in his throat.

[1] Thus preaching is singing, writing is playing the psaltery, the less ostentatious task, but sometimes the more enduring.

What seems to you a long time is short; all these things quickly pass away. What is the long life of a man compared with the eternity of God? Would you be long-suffering? See the eternity of God. You fix your mind on your own few days, and in your own few days you wish everything to be accomplished, that all the impious may be damned and all the good crowned. Would you have all this accomplished in those your days? God accomplishes things in his own time. He is eternal, he can wait, he is long-suffering. You say: "I am not long-suffering, because I am temporal." But you have it in your power to be so; unite your heart with the eternity of God, and you shall be eternal with him.

§ 165. *Rivers lifting up their voices* (Ps. xcii).

What are these *rivers* that have *lifted up their voices?* We have not heard of any. Neither when the Lord was born have we heard of rivers speaking, nor when he was baptised, nor when he suffered. What are these rivers? We have not read of them in the Gospel; still, let us look for them there, for where else shall we find them? It is said in the Gospel, *Jesus stood and cried* (John vii 37-9). Lo, now the Head of rivers is crying, that very fountain of life whence all rivers are to run their course. What does he cry? *Whoever believeth in me, from his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*[1] *This he said of the Spirit which they were to receive who believed in him.* When Jesus was glorified by his resurrection and ascension, as you know, brethren, he sent his Holy Spirit, and filled the disciples. The Spirit himself was a mighty river, whence other rivers were filled; as the psalmist says in another place, *the rush of a river gives joy to the city of God* (Ps. xlv). So then there came rivers running from the belly of the disciples when

[1] The exact imagery is not in the Old Testament, to which our Saviour refers. Is it permissible to suppose that he drew it from pictures of ancient river-gods who are so represented?

they received the Holy Spirit: they themselves became rivers. Peter was not yet a river, when on the enquiry of a serving-maid he thrice denied Christ. But when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and the Jews summoned them and bade them not to speak or teach any more in the name of Jesus, Peter and John said to them: *Judge ye if it is right before God to obey you rather than God* (Acts iv 19). So then the rivers lifted up their voice. And when they were dismissed and came to their own, and told them what the priests and elders had said, their hearers with one accord lifted up their voice and said: *Lord, thou who hast made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them* (Acts iv 23-4), and other things that rivers could say lifting up their voice.

§ 166. *No pride in good works* (Ps. xciii).

The first step for man or woman is confession of sins, or wholesome repentance, sufficient for the correction of the sinner, not a mockery of God. When after repentance the man enters upon a good life, he has still this to attend to, not to attribute to himself the good that he does, but to render thanks to him by whose grace it is done, because he it is that has enlightened him, he it is that has called him. Is he now perfect? No, there is still something wanting to him. What is that? Not to lift his head in pride over those who are not yet living as he lives. How much did the Pharisee lift himself up when he said, *I am not as this publican* (Luke xviii 11), while the publican, with face pressed to the ground, struck his breast, saying, *Lord, be merciful to me a sinner*. The one was proud over his good deeds, the other humble over his evil deeds. See, brethren, God was more pleased with humility over evil deeds than with pride over good deeds: he does so hate pride. This, then, is the Christian theory. No man does anything well[1] but by the grace of God. What a man does

[1] Understand *supernaturally* well. Did Augustine understand that? A question.

ill, is the doing of the man himself; what he does well, he does of the bounty of God. When he begins to do well, let him not attribute it to himself; not attributing it to himself, let him thank him for it of whom he has received it. But in doing well let him not insult or extol himself above another who does not so. The grace of God is not so limited to him as never to reach another.

§ 167. *Prosperity a pit for the sinner* (Ps. xciii).

*Till a pit be dug for the sinner.* You must not think of angels standing on some ground with pickaxes, and digging this huge pit, big enough to take in the whole race of the wicked; and seeing that there are many wicked, say to yourselves from a gross material point of view: "Really, what pit can hold such a multitude of wicked, such a crowd of sinners?" Not so; the pit of sinners is the very prosperity of sinners, into that they fall as into a pit.[1] It is by a secret justice of his own that God spares a man whom he knows for a sinner and impious; this very sparing of him makes him proud by impunity. He thinks himself on high and falls, and falls by the very thinking himself on high. He fancies himself walking on a lofty path, and God calls that a ditch. A ditch goes down, not heavenwards; proud sinners, thinking they are going heavenwards, are buried in earth. The humble, on the contrary, abase themselves to earth, and mount up to heaven.

§ 168. "*Confession*," *two meanings of the word in the Psalms* (Ps. xciv).

*Let us go before his face in confession.* "Confession" is taken in two senses in the Scriptures; there is the confession of a man in praise, and the confession of a man in sins. The confession of a man in praise makes for the honour of him who is praised; the confession of a man in

[1] See St Ignatius's *Exercises*, First rule for the discernment of spirits.

sins makes for the penitence of him who confesses. Men confess when they praise God: they confess also when they accuse themselves—and there is no worthier use of the tongue than that. To praise him, you accuse yourself, for it is his mercy to forgive our sins. Let us go, then, before his face in confession, that we may draw away from our sins, and he may not call us to account for the past, but that all the records of our debts may be burnt, and we may have what is called "a clean slate." Let us confess, surely in praise, the glory of his mercy. If "confession" were always of the penitent, it would not be told in the Gospel how *Jesus exulted in the Holy Ghost, and said, I confess to thee, Father*, etc. (Luke x 21). There was nothing that he could be penitent for, but he confessed in praise of the Father. Here then also we must understand confession to be made in praise of God.

§ 169. *Scandals and temptations* (Ps. xciv).

The heights of the mountains are the elevations of the lands. At one time these elevations—that is, the earthly powers—opposed the Church, promulgated laws against the Church, endeavoured to blot out the Christian name from the earth; but since that prophecy has been fulfilled, *all kings of the earth shall adore him* (Ps. lxxi), that also has happened which is here set down, *the heights of the mountains are his* [A.D. 420]. But thou, perhaps, art beset with temptations, so that, in the very midst of such gracious fulfilment of the promises of God, thou art troubled at the scandals of the world. Those scandals do not harm thee, since they have received their measure from the Lord, *because the sea is his*. This world is the sea, but even the sea God has made, nor can its waves rage except so far as the shore, where God has set bounds. There is no temptation, then, that has not received its measure from the Lord. Be there temptations, be there tribulations, thou art consummated therein, not consumed. See whether these

very temptations are not profitable. Mark the Apostle: *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, but will make with the temptation issue that ye may be able to bear it* (1 Cor. x 13). He does not say, " he will not suffer you to be tempted at all," for in refusing the temptation thou wouldst be refusing that which is the making of thee. So then thou art in the making, and being in the making thou art in the hands of the Artificer. He takes something off from thee, he corrects something, something he planes smooth, something he cleanses; he is working at thee with what I may call his irons—they are the scandals of this world; do thou only take care not to fall from the hands of the Artificer. No temptation shall approach beyond thy strength. Was the high sea a terror to thee ? Be not afraid. *For the sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.* Be thou the dry land. He permits not the waves to overwhelm what he has made. Therefore on this score also *let us make a joyful noise to him.*

§ 170. *Heaven and hell two equal certainties* (Ps. xciv).

*To whom I swore in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest.*[1] A great thing it is for the Lord to speak, how much more for God to swear ! God can swear no rash oath. And by whom does God swear ? By himself, *for he hath no greater by whom to swear* (Heb. vi 13). By himself he confirms his promise, by himself he confirms his threats. Let none say in his heart, it is true what he promises, but false what he threatens. As true as are his promises, as certain are his threats. As certain as you ought to be of rest, of happiness, of eternity, of immortality, if you do what he has commanded, so sure ought you to be of ruin, of the heat of everlasting fire, of damnation in the devil's

[1] On this adjurative use of *if*, cf. 2 Kings[4 Kings] vi 31 : *This may God do to me and that, if the head of Eliseus, son of Saphat, shall rest on his shoulders to-day.*

company, if you despise what he has commanded. He has sworn to them in his wrath, if they shall enter into his rest; and yet some must enter into his rest, for it cannot be that to none shall his rest be given. When they the reprobate are cast out, we shall enter in; while some of the branches are broken off, for their unlikeness [to the parent stem] and unbelief, we shall be grafted in for our faith and humility (Rom. xi 19, 20): for so it is that *God will not reject his people.*

§ 171. *The kingdom of God on earth* (Ps. xcvi).

*The Lord hath come to his kingdom.* He who stood before a judge, he who received buffets, he who was scourged, he who was spat upon, he who was crowned with thorns, he who was hung on the cross and was insulted as he hung there, he who died on the cross, he who was pierced with a lance, he who was buried, even he is risen again. Let kingdoms of earth rage as they may, what are they to do to the King of kingdoms, the Lord of all kings, the Creator of all ages? Is he scorned because he came in such lowliness and appeared in such humility? That was mercy on his part, not impotence. He came in humility that we might be able to take him in. *Let many isles rejoice.* Not on the continent alone has the Gospel been preached, but even the islands in mid-ocean themselves are full of Christians, full of servants of God.[1] The sea keeps not him off who made the sea. Where ships can make land, cannot the word of God make land? The islands are filled. Figuratively, by the islands may be understood all the Churches[2]—islands, because surrounded by roaring breakers of all manner of temptations. But as an island may be beaten, but cannot be broken, by the thud of the breakers, but rather it breaks the breakers than is broken by them, so the Churches of God, springing up all

[1] The British Isles, A.D. 420, and now.
[2] Dioceses of one Catholic Church.

the world over,[1] have suffered persecutions from unbelievers roaring on every side, and lo the islands stand fast, and the sea is now calm.[2]

§ 172. *The persecutor harms himself* (Ps. xcvi).

*Fire shall go before him, and kindle his enemies all around.* Of what fire does he speak, brethren? Not, I think, of that fire into which the wicked are to be sent by the sentence of the Last Judgement (Matt. xxv 41), because he is speaking of a fire that shall go before him, before he comes in judgement. What, then, is this fire? We may take it as burning for the punishment of the wicked, or again for the salvation of the redeemed (Luke xii 49). How for the punishment of the wicked? Because, when Christ was preached, the nations were angered and stirred up a persecution, which anger was a fire, rather consuming the persecutors than the persecuted. At the sight of two parties, the one angry, the other patiently enduring, it is for you to judge which of the two is on fire. You may see such examples in life. Set before your eyes a wicked man, agitated in soul, passionate in countenance, with flaming eyes, flashing out into fiery speeches, bent on murder, plunder, injury and insult, ungovernable, beside himself, while the other, the object of his anger, listens patiently to what he has to say, bears his blows and whatever else he wishes to inflict, ready to turn his other cheek to the smiter—when you see fury on the one side, gentleness on the other, anger here, patience there, here fires of wrath, there endurance, can you hesitate to pronounce which of the two is on fire, and suffering punishment, he whose body is being vexed, or he whose soul is being devastated? Or think you, brethren, that injustice proceeding from man to the injury of another man, hurts him to whom it proceeds, and does not hurt him from whom it proceeds? How can that be? Sometimes a burning torch is applied

[1] New dioceses. [2] Very soon to roar again.

to a wet and green piece of wood; it does not set the wood on fire, but itself burns; so it is with your enemy. You be a green piece of wood, with spiritual sap fresh and vigorous; resist the fires of enmity, pray for him who persecutes you; he burns, you remain whole; and his injustice harms him, but does no harm to you. You are not to take it for harm done to you, if he does something to your body, while your soul goes to God, patient and incorrupt, to receive its crown, following the example of its Master, who preferred to suffer at the hands of the Jews, and who, being able not to die, died, because, being able not to be born, he was born. You were born by natural condition, he of his own sheer will; you die by natural condition, he died of compassion. As then the Jews did not hurt him, so then can no persecutor or enemy hurt you, so long as you choose to be a member of that Head.

§ 173. *The preacher a thundercloud* (Ps. xcvi).

What are the clouds of God? The preachers of the truth. You see a cloud on the sky, misty, dark; it has something hidden inside. The lightning flashes forth; from the thing that you took to be of no account there has sprung out something to fear. Our Lord Jesus Christ sent his apostles, his preachers, like clouds; they seemed ordinary men, and were thought lightly of accordingly, just as clouds are seen and thought nothing of till there comes forth from them something to astonish you. These preachers were, in the first place, men, bearing about with them flesh, weak men; then they were unprofessional, unlearned, ignoble; but there was a gleam of lightning in them. Peter came along, a fisherman, he prayed, and the dead arose. His human form was the cloud, the splendour of this miracle the lightning. As in words, so in deeds; they say wonderful things and do wonderful things. See if it is not true that the whole earth, now Christian, cries Amen, moved by the lightnings breaking from those

clouds. All height of opposition has been levelled down, no one now dares to blaspheme Christ. The pagan does not believe in him, but still does not blaspheme him; and though not yet turned into a living stone, he is beaten out of the position of a hard mountain.[1]

§ 174. *The layman's part in making converts* (Ps. xcvi).

Who among the faithful is silent concerning Christ? Think you that we, standing here, alone announce Christ, and you do not announce him? How is it that people come to us, people whom we have never seen, wanting to be Christians? We have never known them, we have never preached to them. Can they possibly have believed without any announcing to them? *How shall they believe in one of whom they have never heard? How shall they hear without a preacher?* (Rom. x 14). Therefore the whole Church preaches Christ,[2] and the heavens announce his righteousness, because all the faithful are the heavens, all who care to win to God such as have not yet believed, and do this out of charity. From these heavens God thunders the terror of his judgement; and the sometime unbeliever trembles and is afraid and believes. Show men the power of Christ all the world over, by speaking to them and bringing them to love Christ. Lay hold of, bring, draw all you can.

§ 175. *Hating the Evil One* (Ps. xcvi).

*Ye who love the Lord, hate the evil one.*[3] Yes, we have heard; but if we do not do the persecutor's bidding, we are exposed to his fury. How far does that fury go? Answer,

[1] It was a wonder in St Augustine's day that the Roman world had become Christian; it is no less of a wonder, fifteen centuries later, that throughout a much larger world the Church of Christ still struggles on.

[2] *Tota Ecclesia praedicat Christum.*

[3] *Odite malignum*, so read St Augustine, better than our *odite malum*. The Greek πονηρόν is masculine.

why are you a Christian? For an eternal inheritance, or for temporal felicity? Ask your faith: put your soul in the dock of conscience: vex yourself with the fear of judgement: answer, who it is that you have believed, and why you have believed. You tell me you have believed in Christ. What has Christ promised you except what he has shown in himself? He died and rose again, he ascended into heaven. Do you wish to follow? Imitate his passion, expect his promise. Let your adversary, as he threatens, take away this life; God gives you another life. It is he who has given you this life; and if he wills it not, not even this life shall be taken away from you; but if he wills that it be taken away, he has something to offer you in exchange. Be not afraid to be robbed in his cause. Do you object to being stripped of a ragged garment? He will give you a garment of glory. *This corruptible must put on incorruption* (1 Cor. xv 53). This very flesh of yours shall not perish. Men were afraid of their lives; and what did the Lord say to them? *The hairs of your head are all numbered* (Matt. x 30). All things are numbered before God. He will restore all things, who has created all things.

§ 176. *The feasting of the just* (Ps. xcvi).

*Feast, ye just.* At once, perhaps, when the faithful hear this, they begin planning banquets, bringing out the winecups, looking forward to the season of roses. But see what follows: *feast, ye just, in the Lord.* Thou lookest forward to springtime for feasting, but thou hast the Lord for thy feast. The Lord is ever with thee, he keeps no time nor season; thou hast him at night-time, thou hast him in the day. Be right of heart, and he is thy perpetual feast. Worldly joy is not true joy. Hear the prophet: *There is no joy for the wicked, saith the Lord* (Isa. xlviii 52, lvii 21).[1] Let us believe the prophet, brethren. He was a man, he knew both kinds of joy. He knew the joy of the winecup,

[1] *Joy*, so the Septuagint; *peace*, so the Vulgate with the Hebrew.

the joy of the table, the joy of the bed; he knew all those worldly and luxurious joys.[1] But it is not a mere man who says it, it is the Lord who says it. And Jeremy: *I have not desired the day of man, thou knowest* (Jer. xvii 16).[2] Thou who showest me another day, thou who teachest me tidings of another light, thou who sheddest over me another joy, thou who whisperest something else into my ear, thou hast made me not desire the day of man. No doubt Isaiah saw men at their drinking, their revelry, their theatres, sights and shows, the whole world revelling in one frivolity and another, and yet he cried: *There is no joy for the wicked, saith the Lord.* If such joy as he saw was not joy, in comparison with what other joy was it to be called no joy? It is as though thou knewest the sun,[3] and wert to say to someone who was praising some lamp, "Oh, that is no light." He makes a great deal of it, rejoices and exults, and thou sayest it is no light. Or as if some one were admiring a monkey, and thou wert to say, "That is no beauty." And if he came to be taken up with the conformation of limbs in the beast, and admired all those symmetries, thou, who knewest another beauty, wouldst deny that, and say, "It is nought." Why? Because thou knowest another.[4] But thou sayest, "I do not see the beauty that Isaiah saw." Believe, and thou shalt see it. Perchance thou hast not the organ for seeing it; it takes an eye to see that beauty. As it takes a bodily eye to see the light of the sun, so it takes an eye of the soul to see that joy of the Lord. Possibly the eye of thy soul is damaged, defiled, troubled by anger, avarice, passion,

[1] As did Augustine himself.

[2] *The day* in Hebrew means *the triumph*. *Cf.* 1 Cor. iv 5, *to be judged by man's day*. And Luke xxii 53, *your hour and the power of darkness*. Also *the day of the Lord* (*passim*).

[3] The bright blazing sun of Africa.

[4] *Cf.* Tickell's lines:

"I hear a voice you cannot hear, which says I must not stay,
I see a hand you cannot see, which beckons me away."

frenzy or lust, so that it cannot see that light. Believe before thou seest; thou shalt be healed, and then see.

§ 177. *What the Christian has to expect* (Ps. xcvi).

If you are Christians, expect afflictions in this world; do not hope for more tranquil and better times.[1] Brethren, you deceive yourselves; do not promise yourselves what the Gospel does not promise you. You know what the Gospel says: we speak to Christians, we have no right to be falsifiers of the faith. The Gospel says this, that in the last times many evils, many scandals, many afflictions, many iniquities shall abound: *the charity of many shall grow cold, but he that persevereth to the end, he shall be saved* (Matt. xxiv 12, 13). Let none then promise himself what the Gospel does not promise, saying, "Better times are coming. I'm going to do this and buy that." It is well to attend to him who is not deceived, nor ever has deceived anyone. He hath promised thee joy, not here, but in himself. When these transitory things are over, thou mayest hope to reign with him for ever. But take care lest, if thou wishest to reign here, thou mayest neither have joy here nor find it there.

§ 178. *Pagan feasts* (Ps. xcviii).[2]

Think you, brethren, that they whose organs were sounding yesterday are not angry at our fasts? But let us not be angry at them, but fast for them. Our Lord God, whose abode is amongst us, he it is that has bidden us pray for our enemies (Matt. v 41). While the Church is doing this, we see that her persecutors have almost come to an end. She has been heard in so doing. They once prevailed to their own evil; now they are brought to an end to their own good. Would you know how they have been

[1] Which certainly were not coming in Roman Africa.
[2] See the description of one in Newman's *Callista*.

brought to an end? They have been eaten up by the Church. Seek them in their own place, and you find them not; seek them in her that has eaten them up, and they are found inside her. Passing over to the Church, they have become Christians; persecutors have perished, preachers have grown. So then, at their feast-times, because we see the remnant of them still mad over their evil and perverse pleasures, we ask God on their behalf, that they who delight in the sound of the organ may delight still more in the sound of the voice of God. It cannot be that an irrational sound delights the ear, and the voice of God does not delight the heart. Our intention in praying for them, when we fast on their feast-days, is that they may become a holy show to themselves. When they see themselves, they will be displeased with themselves; the reason they are not displeased with themselves is that they do not attend to themselves. The drunkard is not displeased with himself, but he is displeasing to the sober man. Give me a man who already places his joy in God, lives seriously, sighs after that eternal peace which God has promised him, and see how, when he catches sight of another dancing to the sound of an organ, he is more grieved at that man's madness than at the delirium of a fever patient. Therefore, if we recognise the ill condition of those pagans, a condition from which we ourselves have been delivered, let us grieve over them, and grieving over them pray for them, and that we may be the better heard, let us fast for them.

§ 179. *He is to come* (Ps. xcviii).

He is to come, my brethren, he is to come; let us fear him, and so live as to be found on his right hand. He is to come and to judge, placing some on his left hand, others on his right. And that is not done at haphazard. He can make no mistake in dealing with men; he cannot put the bad man where he ought to put the good, nor the good

man where he ought to put the bad. So then let people fear him as to correct themselves. Let them not presume on his mercy, let them not let themselves go, and lead bad lives. *He loveth mercy*, but he also *loveth judgement* (Ps. xxxii). It is his mercy to preach to thee the truth, to cry to thee now to be converted. Is it a small mercy that thou hast lived in evil deeds, and he has not yet taken thee off in thy sins? Thinkest thou that thus there shall be always mercy, and he will punish no one?

§ 180. *Christ's flesh adorable* (Ps. xcviii).

*Adore the footstool of his feet, because it is holy.* See, brethren, what he bids us adore. In another place of Scripture it is said: *Heaven is my throne, and earth the footstool of my feet* (Isa. lxvi 1). Does he then bid us adore the earth because it is the footstool of God's feet? And how shall we adore earth, when Scripture says openly: *the Lord thy God shalt thou adore* (Deut. vi 13)? I am in a perplexity; I fear to adore earth, lest he damn me who has made heaven and earth; on the other hand, I fear not to adore the footstool of my Lord's feet, because the psalm says, *adore the footstool of his feet.* In my hesitation I turn to Christ, because he it is that I am seeking here; and I find a way how without impiety earth may be adored, and how without impiety the footstool of his feet may be adored. For he took of the earth earth, because flesh is of the earth, and he received flesh of the flesh of Mary. And because in that very flesh he walked here, and that very flesh he has given us to eat, for our salvation—and no one eats that flesh without first adoring it[1]—a way is found how such footstool of the Lord's feet may be adored, and we may not sin by adoring, but should sin if we did not adore.

[1] *Nemo autem illam carnem manducat nisi prius adoraverit.*

§ 181. *Christ's flesh not carnally but spiritually eaten* (Ps. xcviii).

When our Lord said, *Unless a man eat my flesh, he shall not have life in him*, some seventy of his disciples were scandalised, and said, *This is a hard saying* (John vi 53, 60). They took it foolishly, they conceived it carnally, they thought that the Lord was about to cut off portions of his body and give to them. It was they themselves that were hard, not the saying. Had they not been hard, but gentle-minded, they would have said to themselves, " Not without reason does he say this, there must be some latent mystery." They went away, but he instructed his twelve disciples who had stayed with him, and said: *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life* (John vi 64). " Understand spiritually what I have said: it is not this Body which you see that you are to eat, nor this Blood to drink which they are to shed who shall crucify me. It is a mystery [*sacramentum*] that I have commended to you; take it spiritually, and it will give you life."[1]

§ 182. *Sins of the saints and their punishment* (Ps. xcviii).

What seems quite perfect to men, is imperfect in view of the perfection required by God. Artists execute a work of art, and exhibit it to the unprofessional public. Those unprofessional judges look upon it as complete. Then the artists, who know what is wanting to it, take it and elaborate it, to the astonishment of men who see that so much elaboration has come to be added to works which they thought already quite perfect. You see this in

[1] *Non hoc corpus quod videtis manducaturi estis*, means, " You shall not eat my Body in such state as you see it before your eyes, but mystically and sacramentally, still really." Above, St Augustine had said: " That very Blood which the Jews had shed, through madness, they came to drink by grace ": *ipsum sanguinem quem per insaniam fuderunt, per gratiam biberunt* (in Ps. lxv, n. 5).

buildings, and pictures, and articles of dress, and in almost every branch of art. At first sight the work is pronounced perfect, and the eyes desire no more; but the judgement of the rule of art is different from the judgement of the untrained eye. So those saints were before the eyes of God; they seemed faultless, perfect, very angels; but he knew what was wanting to them, and punished them accordingly, not in anger, but in mercy. I look to see what matter of punishment there was in their lives, and humanly speaking, I find none; but from what I know of the way in which servants of God suffer, I must say they were punished daily. Daily they suffered the contradictions of peoples, the iniquities of evil livers; they were forced to live among men whose lives they continually reprehended.[1] That was their punishment, and he who thinks it small is not yet in the way of perfection. So far is the unrighteousness of others painful to thee, as far as thou hast removed thyself from thy own unrighteousness. When thou hast become good grain thyself, then shall the cockle appear to thee (Matt. xiii 26). In many things also, the better known the will of God is to us, the more does our own deficiency appear. The better he is known to us, the more readily do we break out into weeping and tears. We see the righteousness that God looks for in us, and in what a state of imperfection we still lie; and the saying is verified in us: *He that addeth knowledge, addeth grief* (Eccles. i 18). Therefore, brethren, as many of us as are advancing in Christ, let us not fancy that we are to go unscourged, because, however much we be advanced, he knows our sins, and sometimes shows them to us, and then we also see our sins. And when we begin to be such among men (*tales inter homines*) that men no longer find in us anything to find fault with, he still finds fault who knows all things, and punishes all our purposes because he is propitious to us.

[1] He is speaking of Moses, Aaron and Samuel.

§ 183. *Huzzahing to the Lord* (Ps. xcix).

*Huzzah to the Lord, all the earth.* Huzzahing [*jubilatio*] is uttering not words, but a note of gladness without words; it is the cry of the soul expanding herself for gladness to her full capacity, an expression of feeling without any definite idea. The exultation of a man in joy flies apart from any words that can be spoken and understood,[1] and breaks out into a cry jubilant without words, showing thereby that glad indeed he is, so full of gladness that his tongue cannot utter the matter thereof: thus field-labourers huzzah as they gather in the harvest or vintage, putting in between their words certain inarticulate cries.[2] If anyone perchance does not recognise this, because he has never noticed it, let him notice it in future. When then do we huzzah? When we praise what cannot be uttered in words. We consider the created universe, earth and sea and sky and all things that are in them;[3] we consider how they all have their own origins and causes, we think of the energy of seeds, the order of birth, the limit of permanence, the hour of decay and departure: how the ages roll on without any interruption, the stars revolve somehow [*quodam modo*] from east to west, and accomplish their yearly courses; we see the marking out of months and the prolonging of the hours (of daylight in summer-time): we discern in all these instances that there is something invisible, called spirit or soul, in all animals, moving them to seek pleasure and shun annoyance, to preserve in the integrity of their being some trace of unity: we see further that there is in man something that he has in common with the angels of God—and with the beasts, as life, hearing, sight and the rest—but something that has an understanding of God, something properly belonging to mind, something that

[1] The Maurist editors print *non possunt*. But many MSS. omit the *non*, I think, rightly.

[2] As hip-hip-hurrah.

[3] Notably the stars, which mean so much more to us than they did to St Augustine.

distinguishes fairness from unfairness as the eye distinguishes white from black. In all this consideration let the soul ask herself: Who created all these things, and among them thyself? Name him; and to name him, think of him. Thou canst think of a thing and be unable to name it, but in no way canst thou name what thou art unable to think of. And to think of him, approach him. Anything that thou wishest to see well, thou approachest to look at. But as these bodily things are seen with the eyes, so is he seen with the mind; he is studied and beheld by the heart. And where is the heart whereby he is seen? *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God* (Matt. v 2). What thou wishest to see is not far from thee. *In him we live and move and be.* What a misery it is to be far from him who is everywhere!

§ 184. *Purgatory* (Ps. xcix).[1]

It is great happiness, brethren, to be in this great house a slave, even a slave in fetters. Fear not, thou fettered slave, praise the Lord, attribute thy fetters to thy own desire; praise him in fetters, that thy fetters may be turned into ornaments. Not in vain, not unheard goes the prayer: *Let the groan of the fettered enter into thy sight* (Ps. lxxviii).

§ 185. *The muckrake* (Ps. xcix).

Men are misled into either not taking up the better life, or entering upon it rashly, because they who would praise it praise it without mention of the evils that are mixed up therewith; and they who would blame it blame it so spitefully and perversely as to shut their eyes to what is good, and see only or exaggerate its real or fancied evil points. Thus it comes about that every walk of life [*professio*] in the Church, being badly, that is incautiously praised, invites

[1] St Augustine is not speaking here of purgatory, but his words are applicable.

men who hear its praises and come accordingly; and coming they find some associates such as they never expected to find there; whereupon, offended at the evil, they shrink back from the good company. As a whole, the Church of God is praised. "Grand fellows those Christians, none like them; they all love one another, everyone renders everyone else every possible service; there is hymn-singing all the world over, with one accord the God of peace is praised." Among the hearers there happens to be a man who knows nothing of the evil element that is passed over in silence; he comes in on the strength of this praise, and finds the evil element that he had never been told of; he is offended at such false Christians, and flies off away from the true Christians. On the other hand, ill-natured, scurrilous tongues break out into invective: "What are the Christians like? Who are the Christians? Misers, usurers, crowding into theatres and amphitheatres while the games are on, and on holidays filling the churches —drunkards, gluttons, backbiters." There are such Christians, but they are not the only Christians. This blind-minded muckrake passes over the good in silence, and that uncautious-minded panegyrist passes over the evil in silence. If we are to praise the present-day Church of God as the Scriptures praise her, here are the words: *As a lily among thorns, so is my beloved* (Cant. ii 2). This a man hears and takes to heart, is pleased with the lily, comes in, holds by the lily, and tolerates the thorns.—So again with the clergy. Panegyrists of the clerical body fix their gaze on the good ministers, the faithful dispensers, who bear with all, and pour out their very life-blood on souls whom they wish to help, *seeking not the things that are their own, but the things that are of Jesus Christ* (Phil. ii 21). This element they praise, and forget the evil element blended therewith. Again, there are those who are always finding fault with the avarice of the clergy, the misdeeds of the clergy, the quarrels of the clergy, their

covetousness, drunkenness, love of belly-cheer. You, my friend, blame spitefully; and you, my other friend, praise incautiously. Do you, optimist, say that there is a blend of evil; do you, muckrake, see among the clergy also the good and worthy members.—So also in the common life of brethren in a monastery. "Grand men there, holy men; daily hymns, prayers, praises of God, that is their life; their business is study; they labour with their hands, and thereby gain their livelihood; they are no greedy beggars, they use with a sense of sufficiency and charity whatever is brought in to them by pious brethren; no one has in his use anything that another has not got; all love one another, all bear with one another." Praises, praises, words, words. He who knows not what goes on inside—knows not how, when the wind blows in from the sea, even ships in the harbour have collisions—enters the monastery, hoping for a quiet life, with never a companion hard to put up with. But there he encounters evil brethren, whose evil character could not have been discovered, had they not been admitted;[1] and they must first be borne with in hope of their correction, nor can they readily be shut out unless they are first borne with. Thereupon the newcomer breaks out into an ungovernable fit of impatience. "Who sought to bring me in here? I thought there was charity in this place." So, irritated in the annoyance he suffers from a few men, he does not persevere in the fulfilment of what he has vowed, but abandons his holy purpose. Once he is out, he too turns muckrake and slanderer, and tells tales of those things only which he declares he could not stand, and sometimes true tales. "This man did this thing there, and the other there did that." You bad man, why do you pass over in silence the good? You are loud in your vituperation

[1] These evils are inseparable accidents of human nature. But now more than in St Augustine's day there is a great straining off of undesirable applicants before profession or ordination.

of those whom you could not stand, but of those who endured your badness you have not a word to say.

§ 186. *Innocence lost by doing and by not doing* (Ps. c).

A man is guilty in two ways: either by making another man miserable, or by deserting another man in his misery. Who is he that makes other men miserable? He that does violence, steals, tempts another man's wives, lays false accusations, wishes of sheer malevolence to give pain to other men. Who is he who abandons others to their misery? He who sees a poor man in need of help, and, having wherewith to succour him, despises, scorns him, estranging his heart from him. Allowing even that he were such a grand person as never to have need of mercy himself, still he would be guilty of pride if he forsook another in misery. But now that he is still in the tribulation of mortal flesh, not knowing what may happen to himself to-morrow, he is not innocent if he despises the tears of the miserable. But who is innocent? He who, while not hurting anyone else, does not hurt himself either; for he who hurts even himself is not innocent [*non est innocens qui sibi nocet*]. A man says, " See, I have not taken from anyone, I have oppressed none, I am going to treat myself well out of my own means, and enjoy the fruit of my lawful labour, I intend to have a good dinner, to spend as much as pleases me, to drink in the company I choose as much as I have a mind to drink; who has any complaint against me?" The man reckons himself innocent. But if he is ruining himself, overthrowing the temple of God within himself, how can you expect him to be merciful to others? Can he be merciful to another, who is cruel to himself?

§ 187. *The pelican* (Ps. ci).

Let us not pass over in silence what is said of this bird, not that we would affirm anything rashly, but still we would not silently ignore what writers have set down for

us to read. Do you hear, with the understanding that, if it is true, it suits our purpose; if it is false, then let it drop. These birds are said to kill their young with blows of their beaks, and when they have killed them, to mourn over them in the nest for three days; finally the mother wounds herself severely, and pours her blood over her young, and with this poured over them they come to life again. The story may be true, and it may be false; but if it be true, see how well it suits him who has given us life by his Blood. But how does that part of the story suit Christ, that the mother herself kills her young? Does not the text suit him: *I will kill, and I will bring to life; I will smite, and I will heal* (Deut. xxxii 39)? Would Saul ever have died to the life of a persecutor, if he had not been struck from heaven; or ever would have risen up to be a preacher, if he had not been quickened by that Blood? But let them see to the story who have written it; we ought not to found our ideas on uncertainty.

§ 188. *Ready forgiveness no licence to sin* (Ps. ci).

What is the reproach that pagans of to-day level against us? "You are corrupters of discipline, perverters of public morality." Why, what have we done? They say: "By giving men place for repentance, promising impunity for all offences; therefore men do evil, in the sure hope that all will be forgiven when they are converted." Insulter, I invite you to this bread of ashes. You surely dare not say that you are not a sinner. Examine your conscience, mount the judgement-seat of your own mind, spare not yourself, examine yourself, let the innermost recesses of your conscience speak to you, see whether you dare make profession of innocence. If the man really looks into himself, he will be troubled; if he does not flatter himself, he will confess. And what will you do, unhappy man, if there shall be no harbour of escape from punishment? If there has been only an opening for sin, and

there is no pardon of sins, where will you be ? whither will you go ? Certainly it is provision made for you that this poor man is to *eat ashes for bread, and mingle his drink with tears*. Are you not now glad of such a banquet ? " Still," he says, " men add sin to sin in hope of pardon." Nay, they would add sin to sin in despair of pardon. Do you not observe the licentious cruelty of the life of gladiators ? Why is that, except that, as victims destined for slaughter, they wish to gratify their lust before shedding their blood ? Would you not say to yourself: " Here I am a sinner, here I am a wicked man, here I am in a state of damnation, there is no hope of pardon, why should I not do anything I like doing, though it is not to the liking of the law ? Why should I not gratify as far as I can all my desires, seeing that hereafter there is nothing left for me but torments ?"[1] Would you not say this to yourself, and so become worse of sheer despair ? Rather he corrects you, who promises you pardon, and says: *I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live* (Ezech. xviii 32). Obviously, with this harbour before you, you reef sail in your course of iniquity, put the ship about, steer your bark in righteousness, and in hope of life neglect not medicine. And be not herein displeased with God, as though by this promise of pardon he gave sinners assurance in their sin. For, lest men might live from bad to worse in despair, he has promised the harbour of pardon: again, lest they might live from bad to worse in hope of forgiveness, he has made the day of death uncertain; most farsighted in both appointments, of refuge for them if they return, and a threat if they put it off. *Eat ashes with thy bread, and mingle thy drink with thy tears;* by this banquet thou shalt come to the table of God. Do not despair, pardon is promised thee. " Thanks be to God," he says, " I hold God's promise." Then live well now. " To-morrow," he says, " I will live well." God has promised thee pardon, but no one has

[1] Still more, if there is no hereafter at all.

promised thee to-morrow. If thou hast led an evil life, live well now to-day. *Thou fool, this night they shall require thy soul of thee;* and I do not say, *the things that thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?* (Luke xii 20), but *according as thou hast lived, where shalt thou be?*

§ 189. *Lazarus raised and loosed* (Ps. ci).

What would it profit Lazarus that he came forth from the tomb, unless it were said, *Loose him and let him go* (John xi 44)? Christ indeed with a cry raised him from the sepulchre. Christ by that same cry restored his soul to him, Christ cleared away the mass of earth blocking the tomb, and he came forth bound—came forth, I say, not on his own feet, but by the power of him who led him out. This is what happens in the heart of a penitent. When you hear of a man repenting of his sins, he has already come to life again: when you hear of his confessing the secrets of his conscience [*confitendo proferre conscientiam*], he is now brought out of his sepulchre, but is not yet loosed. When is he loosed? By whom is he loosed? *What you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven* (Matt. xiii 19; *cf.* John xx 22-3). Right and proper it is that the loosening of a sinner from sin can be done by the Church; but the raising of the dead man can be done only by the voice of the Lord: God works this change internally.[1]

§ 190. *The Great Church* (Ps. ci).[2]

"That Church, which was the Church of all nations, is now no more, it has perished." So they say who are not in it. What an impudent speech! Is the Church non-

[1] How well all this fits in with the Church's doctrine of contrition, confession and absolution!

[2] Harnack's term for the undivided Church, which was before the Greek schism of the eleventh century, but is supposed since to have perished. St Augustine had the Donatists in view.

existent, because you are not in it? See rather whether it be not that you are non-existent [as a Christian], for the Church shall be, even though you be not. This speech, abominable, detestable, presumptuous, and full of falsehood, with no foundation in truth, no illumination of wisdom, no seasoning of wit, vain, temerarious, precipitous, pernicious, was foreseen by the Spirit of God.

§ 191. *The eternal God* (Ps. ci).

Every day in this present time comes that it may cease to be, every hour, every month, every year; before it comes, it shall be; when it has come, it shall be no more. Those thy years are eternal, they shall be *unto generations of generations*.[1] There is such a thing; and if we recognise it well, we shall be in it, and the years of God shall be in us, because God himself shall be in us, that *God* may *be all in all* (1 Cor. xv 28). The years of God are the eternity of God, and the eternity of God is the very substance of God, where nothing is past, as being no longer, nothing to come, as being yet to be. There is there only *is*, there is there no *was*, no *shall be*. Whatever is there, simply *is*. Such was God's message in sending his servant Moses (Exod. v). Moses asked the name of him that sent him, and was told it, because he asked, not for curiosity but for the need of his ministry. *What shall I say to the children of Israel, if they say, Who hath sent thee to us?* And he, declaring himself as Creator to creature, as God to man, immortal to mortal, eternal to temporal, said: *I am who am : say to the children of Israel, He who is, hath sent me to you*. Great is this *is*. To this so great *is*, what is man, whatever he is? Do not lose heart, thou human frailty! Thou hast heard what I am by myself, hear now what I am for the sake of thee. Already there is

[1] *In generationes generationum*, so the Greek. St Augustine has *in generatione generationum*; the present Vulgate, *in generationem et generationem*.

eternity, already there is the Word, and time is not yet, because time also is made. O Word before all times, whereby all times were made, thyself born in time, being life eternal, calling creatures of time, making them eternal! This is the *generation of generations. For generation cometh, and generation goeth* (Eccles. i 4). You see generations of men on earth, like leaves on a tree—I mean a bay, or olive, or other evergreen tree. So the earth bears mankind like leaves; it is full of men, but some of them die, while others are born and take their place. That tree is ever adorned with a vesture of green foliage, but look underneath and mark how many dry leaves you are treading on. He had said: *I am who am.* But further to console us, he added: *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* And we are the seed of Abraham; and we, abject men, earth and ashes as we are, do hope in him. We are servants, but for us our Master has taken the form of a servant; for us poor mortals he, the immortal, has willed to die; for us he has shown this example of resurrection. Therefore let us hope that we shall reach these stand-still years, in which the days are not brought to an end by the going round of the sun; but that which is remains as it is, because that alone truly is.

§ 192. *We are all ill* (Ps. cii).

Who is not ill in this life? Whose life is aught else than a long-protracted illness?[1] To be born here in a mortal body is to begin to be ill. Our needs are met by the prop of daily medicines. Would not hunger kill you, if you did not take medicine against it? Would not thirst be the death of you, if you did not put it off, and altogether quench it by medicine?[2] Slaked for a little while, your thirst will return. With such fomentations we temper the pain of our illness. You are tired with standing, you are

[1] *Cf.* Virgil's *mortalibus aegris.*
[2] Thirsty Africa, bleak and cold Britain.

refreshed by sitting; the sitting is a medicine against weariness, and yet over the medicine again comes weariness, you will be unable to sit long; where one weariness is relieved, another commences. Poor patient, why weary yourself with these things? Think first of your health, your salvation. Sometimes a man is sick in his own house, in his own bed, with one of those more manifest illnesses, for which doctors are called in; he pants with fever-fits, he would like to think of his property, to give some order in his house or on his farm, to make some arrangements; but at once the disquiet and murmur of his attendants bid him desist from such cares; he is told: "Leave all that alone, and think first of your health." Take that as said to yourself, every man of you. If you are not ill, I will allow your thinking of other things, but if your very languor convicts you of illness, think first of your health and salvation. Christ is your salvation; think of Christ.

§ 193. *A legend of the eagle* (Ps. cii).

*Thy youth shall be renewed as an eagle's.* The eagle is said, when weighed down with years, to be unable to take its food by reason of an abnormal growth of its beak. The upper part of its beak, which is curved over the lower part, grows unduly in old age, and prevents the creature opening its mouth, as that requires some space between the upper and lower beaks to enable them to act like scissors. Whereupon, the eagle is said to strike its upper beak against a rock, and so it comes to free itself of that burdensome growth which hindered it taking its food. It goes to feed, and everything is repaired; it will be like a young eagle after old age; the vigour of all its limbs returns, the lustre of its plumage, the guidance of its wings, it soars aloft as before, and experiences what we may call a resurrection. So does the moon, rising and waxing, signify to us the resurrection; but when it is waxed full, the moon does not remain full, but wanes again, that it may be a perpetually

recurring sign. And so of this story of the eagle; the eagle is not renewed to immortality as we are renewed to life everlasting; but the similitude is alleged to teach us that what mars our life, the Rock takes away. *And the rock was Christ* (1 Cor. x 4).

§ 194. *Discrimination in almsgiving* (Ps. cii).

These two precepts seem contradictory, but the contradiction will be opened out to us, if we knock in the name of Christ: *Give not to the sinner, and harbour not the sinner* (Ecclus. xii 4); and yet, *Give to every one that asketh thee* (Luke vi 10). You say, it is a sinner who asks of me. Give—not as to a sinner. When do you give as to a sinner? When the point in which he is a sinner is your motive in giving. Let Your Charity attend a little till the matter is cleared up by examples, for it is a useful thing to know. When some stranger who accosts you is hungry, if you have the means of giving, give; if you see that is a case of giving to meet a need, give. Let not your feelings of compassion be checked by the thought that he who accosts you is a sinner; the sinner who accosts you is a man. There are two names in this sentence, neither of them superfluous; one expressive of the fact that he is a man, the other that he is a sinner. As a man, he is the work of God; as a sinner, he is the work of man. Give to the work of God: give not to the work of man. And how, you say, do you forbid me to give to the work of man? What is that? It is to give to the sinner for the sake of his sin, liking him because of his sin. And whoever would do that? you say. Who would do it? I would that no one would do it; I would it were not done publicly. Why does a man give to the *venator?*[1] He loves that point in

[1] The *venator* was one who *hunted* and fought with wild beasts in the amphitheatre. All the Fathers are emphatic in their condemnation of these relics of pagan games. Were St Augustine living now, instead of the bygone *venator*, he might instance a collector of funds for the Rationalist Press.

him wherein he is most wicked; he feeds and clothes that in him, that very wickedness which is a public spectacle to all. Givers to such people, do they give to men? What they have in view is not the nature of God's work, but the wickedness of man's work. Would you see what you honour in the *venator* when you clothe him? Let it be said to you: "Be you such yourself: you love him, you make up to him with joy: you are ready almost to take off your own coat and clothe him in it: do not take it as an insult if it be said to you, *Such be your children.*" But it is an insult, you say. Why is it an insult but that that trade is an iniquity? In giving to it you are giving, not to fortitude, but to turpitude. If he were a man merely, and not a *venator*, you would not give; what you know in him is his vice, not his nature.

§ 195. *The flower of the field* (Ps. cii).

*Man's days are as grass: as the flower of the field, so shall he bloom.* All the glory of humanity, honours, power, riches, swollen pride and insolence, all is the flower of the field. That house flourishes, that is a great house, that family flourishes. And how many such flourishing people are there, and how many years do they live? What you reckon many years is a short time to God. All the beauty of the year—it scarcely lasts the twelvemonth out. How soon the flowers are gone! Whatever is very beautiful quickly fades. *All flesh is grass, and the bright bloom of man is as the flower of the field; the grass hath withered, and the flower is fallen, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever* (Isa. xl 6). Since, then, the Father *hath known the stuff we are made of*, that we are grass, and can flourish only for a time, he has sent us his Word, and his Word, who does abide for ever, he has made brother to the grass which does not abide for ever. His natural-born, Only-begotten Son, born of his own substance, he hath made brother to so many adopted brethren. Wonder not that

thou shalt become partaker of his eternity; he has first become partaker of thy grass. Will he deny thee that which is high above thee, who has taken up that which was lowly of thee?

§ 196. *Responsibility* (Ps. ciii).

It is known to all that we have to render an account of the bread that we have received and distribute. Your Charity knows that well. The page of Holy Writ is not silent about it, nor does God flatter us. You may notice how free we are in addressing you from this pulpit; and if perchance I am not sufficiently free, or all who speak from this place are not sufficiently free, at any rate the Word of God is afraid of no man. Whether we are afraid or whether we are outspoken, we are bound to announce him, who fears none. God, not man, has ensured you this boon of hearing by the lips of timid men the word of him who is free and fearless. You will find no excuse in the judgement of God, unless you exercise yourselves in good works, and yield proper fruit of the truths that you have heard. The proper fruit is good works, the proper fruit is sincere love, not only of a brother, but even of an enemy. Spurn no suppliant: if you can give, give; if you cannot, show yourself affable. God crowns the interior act of will, where it finds no means of outward action. Let no one say, "I have nothing." Charity is not given out of the purse. Whatever we say, and whatever we have said, and whatever we shall be able to say, either we, or those who come after us, or all who have gone before us, all has no other end than charity, because *charity is the end of the commandment* (1 Tim. i 5). When you ask anything of God, ask your own hearts, and see how you get over this verse: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* You are not praying unless you say this prayer. If you say any other, God does not hear you, because yours is not the prayer dictated by the Legal Authority [*Jurisperitus*] whom

he has sent. We needs must then pray according to that form when we say our vocal prayers. Let us well understand what is said, for our Lord would have it made plain. Omit prayer, and you have no hope; pray otherwise than as the Master has ordained, and you will not be heard; tell a lie in your prayer, and you will obtain nothing. Therefore we must pray, and tell the truth, and pray as he taught. Whether you like it or not, you will have to say daily: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Would you say it securely? Do as you say.

§ 197. *Christ putting on weakness* (Ps. ciii).

The Lord himself had coffers into which were put the things he needed, and coins were in his possession for his people's necessary uses and his own; for the Evangelist does not lie when he says, *He was hungry* (Matt. xxi 18). He chose to hunger for thy sake, *becoming poor, whereas he was rich, that we might be enriched by his poverty* (2 Cor. viii 9). Yes, he had coffers; and it is told of some religious women that they walked where his feet went, preaching the Gospel, and ministered to him of their substance (Luke viii 3). Later on, Paul was to seek nothing of that sort (1 Cor. viii). But because many weak men would be sure to seek these conveniences, Christ played the part of the weak. Paul's conduct was the more sublime: was it more sublime than Christ's? Christ's was the more sublime, because it was the more merciful. Seeing that Paul would not seek those things, he provided against his condemning anyone who should seek them. In like manner, while foreseeing that many martyrs would go to martyrdom eager, and rejoicing, exulting in their very sufferings, brave old men, a hundred years old, ripe for the barn—yet Christ preferred to assume the character of sundry weak brethren, who he saw would be upset at the prospect

of suffering, and provide for them that they should not give way, but rather unite their human will with the will of their Creator. So in their person he said: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death. Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me* (Matt. xxvi 38-9). He showed what the weak man would say, but he went on to show what the weak man should do: *Yet not what I will, but what thou.*

§ 198. *Supporting your pastor* (Ps. ciii).

One man asks you for alms, and in the voice of the asker you recognise whom to give to; but in the case of another man, the less he asks, the more vigilant should you be to forestall the possibility of his asking. Be careful in this matter, my brethren; you will discover the indigence of many servants of God, if only you have a mind to discover it. The reason you do not find it is because you delight in the excuse: "Oh, we didn't know." (Your pastor) does not want food, but perhaps he wants clothes. Or he does not want clothes, but he may want a roof over him; he may be building a church, or planning some useful work in the house of God; he is waiting for you to look his way, he is waiting for you to *have understanding over the needy and the poor*. But you, a hard earth, stony, unwatered, or watered in vain, keep to your saying: "I did not know, nobody said anything to me about it." Nobody said anything to you? Christ does not cease to speak. Do you not see your prelate's coffer empty? Surely you see the fabric rising, where you are to go in and pray. Or perhaps you think that your pastors are laying up treasures? We know many of them who are laying up no treasures, and are unable to meet their daily wants, people whom you would not think. You would find them if you cared to find them, if you would look about you and kept your eyes open. I have said what I could, as much as I could. I think it is clear to you, brethren, as the Apostle

says (1 Cor. viii 13), that *I do not say this that you may do these things for us*. God grant that I may not have spoken in vain.[1]

§ 199. *The sparrow on the cedar* (Ps. ciii).

*There the sparrows shall nest*. Where? On the cedars of Lebanon. The cedars of Lebanon are the nobles of this world, exalted in birth, wealth and honours. The sparrows are the servants of God, who hear in the gospel: *Sell all that thou hast, and come follow me* (Matt. xix 21). And not only great folk have heard this, but little folk also; and little folk have had a mind to do this, and be spiritual men, and not to be tied to wives, nor worn out with the care of children, nor fixed to any home of their own, but to take up a life in common. But what is it that these sparrows have forsaken? What great thing? Here is a case of a convert to religious life, who has left his father and poor hut, hardly one bed and one box. Still he is converted, he has become a sparrow, he has sought spiritual things. Good, excellent! Let us not insult him; let us not say, "You have forsaken nothing." Let not him be proud who has forsaken much. He has forsaken much, my brethren, who not only has forsaken whatever he had, but also whatever he desired to have. What poor man does not swell with hopes of the good things of this world? Who does not daily desire to increase his store? That cupidity has been cut off; it threatened to grow indefinitely,

[1] This was a charity sermon on behalf of the Archbishop of Carthage, not preached in St Augustine's own diocese of Hippo. On a former occasion, speaking then also as now at Carthage, St Augustine had applied the verse of Ps. lxxx, *Take the psalm, and give the timbrel*. "The timbrel (drum) is made of leather, and belongs to the flesh. The psalm is spiritual, the timbrel carnal. So then, people of God, congregation of God, take things spiritual, and give things carnal (1 Cor. ix 11). If, then, you are greedy of things spiritual, be devout in contributing things carnal. *Take the psalm, and give the timbrel:* receive our voice, and in return put forth your hands."

a limit has been put to it; shall we say that nothing has been forsaken? Peter has given up absolutely the whole world, and Peter has received the whole world. *As having nothing, and possessing all things* (2 Cor. vi 10). Many do this, who have little to leave, yet come and turn unto useful sparrows. They seem little creatures, because they have not the height of worldly dignity; they nest in the cedars of Lebanon. These cedars of Lebanon, the noble and wealthy and high folk of this world, inasmuch as they hear and appreciate the text, *Blessed is he that hath understanding on the needy and poor*, diminish[1] their possessions, their apparent high estate, and give therewith to the servants of God. They give lands, they give gardens, they build churches and monasteries; they gather the sparrows to nest in the cedars of Lebanon. Look over the whole earth, and see if it is not so. Not by what I have believed on hearsay, but by what I have seen, I have been led to say this; sheer experience has given me understanding. Look through the length and breadth of the land, ye who know, and see in how many cedars of Lebanon these sparrows of whom I spoke nest.[2]

§ 200. *The voyage of life* (Ps. ciii).

This world is still agitated by billows of temptations, by storms and squalls of tribulations; still through this world we make head [*hac tamen itur*]. The sea may menace, its waves may heave, its storms may rise; still we make head. There is given us a bark to sail in. We are not yet there, but we cry: *My hope art thou, my portion in the land of the living* (Ps. cxli). My hope in the land of the dying, my portion in the land of the living. Let us keep watch on the bark: even on the waters we are safe. Let

[1] For *attendunt* read *attenuant*.

[2] We see the remains of their nests in the ruined abbeys of England, evidence of the princely munificence of our Catholic ancestors.

not Christ sleep; let not faith sleep; if it sleep, let it be awakened. Christ will command the waves, Christ will still the sea; the voyage shall come to an end, there shall be joy in the home-land [*finietur via, gaudebitur in patria*].

§ 201. *The power of the devil* (Ps. ciii).

O Church, mark the serpent's head. What is the serpent's head? The first suggestion of sin. Something unlawful comes into your mind; do not fix your mind thereon, do not consent. What comes into your mind is the serpent's head: trample on the head, and you will have done with the rest of his wrigglings. Despise the suggestion. But he suggests gain. There is a pot of money in the matter; if you commit this fraud, you will be a rich man. There's the serpent's head, trample on it. But oh, so much money! *And what does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and suffers the loss of his own soul?* (Matt. xvi 26). Many say: Why has the devil got so much power to rule in this world? And how much power has he? No power at all, unless you permit him. Do you so act as that he may have no power over you; or if he is permitted to tempt, that he may go away beaten. Let no one say, then, that he has great power. Men see how much power he has got, they do not see what he has lost. Let me offer you a brief similitude, for it is a great thing to know and understand this point. Fancy the whole administration of the created universe to be a great house; this great house has a master, it has servants; and among the servants there are some who stand nearest to the master, and have the better posts of stewards of the wardrobe, of the treasure, of the barns and large estates, while there are other servants in the lowest offices, some of them acting as scavengers, and many grades between the highest and the lowest. Suppose, then, some high steward commits an offence, and in punishment is made by his master a doorkeeper in some out-of-the-way place. Here, in the

exercise of the power given him, and according to the measure of that power which he has received from his master, he annoys those who wish to come in or go out. They, not knowing that he was once a high steward, they fancy that his power is great, because they do not know what he has lost. That doorkeeper, to be sure, may act without the knowledge of his master, and trouble someone without his ordering it. But the devil is not put to guard the door whereby we go in to God—Christ is that door (John x 9), and by him we enter upon life everlasting—there is, however, another door of entrance into this world, a door of mortality. At this door the devil is a sort of doorkeeper, dealing with the losses and gains of this frail flesh, yet not so as to do anything without the knowledge or against the will of the Master.[1]

§ 202. *Four ways of temptation* (Ps. cvi).

*Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to the Lord, and his wonderful works to the children of men.* The fourfold repetition of this verse marks out for us four sorts of temptations. Take a man to begin with, making no effort, living the old life with a fallacious sense of security, reckoning that there is nothing beyond this life, though it must finish some day, his heart buried in the allurements of the world, his conscience lulled to sleep with deadly delights.

[1] On verse 23 of this psalm, *Man shall go forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening*, all that St Augustine has to say is this: "Let that man do his good works in the security of the peace of the Church, let him work even to the end. Some day there will be darkness and a violent assault, but in the evening, that is, at the end of the world: at present, the Church works in peace and tranquillity."—The evening came with Augustine's death, in the invasion of the Vandals, not the end of the world but the end of Christian Africa. A similar assurance of the inviolable temporal greatness of the Church possessed the ecclesiastical mind on the very eve of the Reformation. The infallibility of the Church does not extend to the details of her own future history on earth. *It is not for you to know the times or seasons* (Acts i 7).

For such a man to be roused from his sleep, to be solicitous about his state and see the grace of God, is it not the intervention of the hand of God arousing him? He finds himself astray, he wishes to know the truth, he knocks at what door he can, tries what expedient he can, wanders where he can, suffers from famine of truth. This, then, is the first temptation, one of wandering and famine. When in the weariness of this temptation he has cried out to God, he is brought to the way of faith, and thence he begins to advance towards the City of Peace. So he is brought to Christ. When he is there, knowing now what commandment he ought to observe, he sometimes thinks a great deal of himself, and presumes on his own strength. So he begins to have a mind to struggle against sins, and through his pride he is overcome. He finds himself bound with the hard knots of passion, and cannot walk for his fetters. The ways are hard, he is hemmed in, a wall of impossibility rears itself before him, the gates are shut, he finds no opening for making his way out to a decent and correct life. This is the second temptation, one of difficulty in doing good, as the first temptation was one of straying and suffering famine. In this temptation also he cries to the Lord, and the Lord delivers him from his necessities, breaks the bonds of difficulty, establishes him in the doing of the right thing. That begins to be easy to him which had been difficult. Whoever has got over these difficulties, and now leads a reputable life among men, without any complaint of bad morals, is next caught up by a third temptation, one of weariness over the monotony of this life. He finds no delight either in reading or in prayer. This third temptation is the reverse of the first: formerly his danger was famine, now it is satiety. Sin no longer attracts him, but neither does the word of God delight him. This also is no light temptation; recognise thyself in it, and here also cry out to the Lord, that he may deliver thee from thy necessities. Delivered from wandering, delivered from

the difficulty of living well, delivered from weariness and distaste of the word of God, perchance thou wilt be worthy of having a people committed to thee, of being seated at the helm of the vessel, and appointed to govern the Church. There is the fourth temptation. Any pious faithful man in the people of God may experience those three former temptations; the fourth is ours. The more we are honoured, the more we are endangered.[1] This temptation of government, this temptation of the dangers that go with the ruling of the Church, touches us particularly. But how shall you be out of it, if the whole ship is going to be endangered? I say this, that you may be not less solicitous over the fourth temptation, and pray less for us, as though it were peculiar to us; that you may not cease your prayers in our need, for you are the first to suffer shipwreck. Why, brethren, because you do not sit at the same helm, do you not sail in the same boat? I think now the whole process is before your eyes; but for the better bringing it home to you, it may be repeated briefly. The first temptation is of aimless wandering, and suffering famine of the Word; the second, of difficulty in overcoming one's passions; the third, of weariness and disgust; the fourth, of the storms and dangers that go with the ruling of Churches. Over all these temptations there are exclamations, and deliverances, and confessions of the mercies of God.

§ 203. *Something we do see* (Ps. cix).

That we might be able in some way to comprehend him who was incomprehensible to mortals, he, the Immortal, became mortal, and went through death to make us immortal, and to give us something to see, something to believe, and still something further to see hereafter. He gave the *form of a servant* (Phil. ii 6, 7), for those about him to see, and not only to see with their eyes, but to touch

[1] *Quanto plus honoramur, tanto plus periclitamur.*

with their hands. With that same form he ascended into heaven, and has bidden us believe what he gave to them to see. But there is something also for us to see. They saw the *sceptre sent forth from Sion*, we see him *rule in the midst of his enemies*. Rule thou, rule in the midst of pagans, Jews, heretics, false brethren! *Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies*. We do not understand this verse aright, if we do not see it being enacted before our eyes.

§ 204. *The order of Melchisedech* (Ps. cix).

*Thou art a priest for ever*. But priest according to what? Still shall there be those victims that were offered by the patriarchs, those altars of blood, the Jewish tabernacle, and the sacraments of the Old Covenant? Those rites are now abolished, now that the Temple is overthrown, the Jewish priesthood put away, victim and sacrifice lost to them: even the Jews have them no more. They see that the priesthood according to Aaron has died out, and they do not recognise the priesthood *according to the order of Melchisedech*. I speak to the [baptised] faithful. If the catechumens do not understand, let them overcome their sloth, and hasten to the fount of knowledge. We must not divulge mysteries. Let the Scriptures apprise you of the meaning of the priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech.[1]

§ 205. *Paschal time* (Ps. cx).

The days have come for us to sing Halleluia.[2] Be attentive, ye good singers, children of the praise and everlasting glory of the true and incorruptible God. Be attentive, ye who know how to *sing and make melody in*

[1] An evident allusion to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, at which the catechumens were not privileged to assist, and at which to this day none assist as active partakers but the baptised faithful.

[2] Our *Alleluia* comes from Italy, where they do not pronounce the *h*.

*your hearts to the Lord* (Eph. v 19), giving thanks in all things, and *praise ye God*, for that is Halleluia. Days come to pass, and pass to come again, signifying the day that neither comes nor passes, that is not preceded by yesterday in coming, nor thrust out by to-morrow in passing. When we come to God, we shall cleave fast to him, and we shall not pass away. *Blessed are they who dwell in thy house, they shall praise thee for ever and ever.* This shall be our business when we have leisure, this shall be our work when we are in vacation, this shall be our activity when we are at rest, this shall be our care when we are free of cares.[1] These paschal days, with grateful cheerfulness, regularly succeed those past days of Lent, whereby is signified the mourning of this life before the resurrection of the Lord's Body. By these fifty days, in which we sing Halleluia, after the resurrection, is signified that blessed eternity, in which the tenpenny piece is added to the forty, and the reward is paid to the labourers who were faithful in this life.[2]

§ 206. *Praise in the mouth of children* (Ps. cxii).

You know, brethren, and have often heard in the Gospel, the Lord's saying, *Suffer children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. If any one receive not the kingdom of God as a child, he shall not enter into it* (Luke xviii). Wherefore, when you hear it sung in the Psalms, *Praise ye the Lord, ye children*, do not think that the exhortation does not concern you, because you have grown beyond childhood, and are either strong, handsome young men,

[1] St Augustine means that God is a Being of infinite interest, inexhaustible, enough to make us cry out for eternity in wonderment and delight and love and awe. Nothing short of this can make man finally happy.

[2] *Denarius additur quadragenario.* This happy conceit is untranslatable. It refers to the parable of the day-labourers in Matt. xx. The *denarius* is the "penny," or rather the "tenpenny-piece" promised to the labourers for their hire. Forty days of Lent, fifty of Paschal Time.

or honoured, white-haired old men. To all of you the Apostle says: *Do not become children in behaviour, but in regard of malice be as children, that in mind ye may be grown men* (1 Cor. xiv 20). The malice that he refers to is particularly pride. Pride, presuming on empty greatness, does not allow of one's walking by the *strait way*, and entering in at the *narrow gate* (Matt. vii). But a child easily gets in through a narrow opening; that is how none enters into the kingdom of heaven but as a child. What is worse than pride, which will have no superior nor God? *The beginning of man's pride is revolt from God* (Ecclus. x 14). This pride, that with swollen neck lifts itself up against the divine commandments, and withstands the sweet yoke of the Lord—down with it, break it, smash it up and consume it. When it is overthrown and extinct, *praise is made perfect from the mouth of babes and sucklings* (Ps. viii); when that is crushed and exterminated, *let him that glorieth glory in the Lord* (1 Cor. i 31). This is not their song who think themselves great people; this not their song who, *knowing God, have not glorified him as God* (Rom. i), who praise themselves, not God. For they are not children: they want their own name preached, and do not praise the name of the Lord. So *they became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened: pretending to be wise, they became foolish* (Rom. i). They wished their own name to be noised abroad as long as possible and as widely as possible, while they themselves were destined quickly to pass away into a narrow hole.

§ 207. *Christians the true Hebrew people* (Ps. cxiii).

We read, dearly beloved, what is narrated in the book of Exodus, how the people of Israel were delivered from the unjust domination of the Egyptians, and passed dry-shod through the divided waters of the sea; how the river Jordan also, when touched by the feet of the priests, who were bearing the ark of the Lord, checked its unrestrained

flow, and the lower portion flowed away seawards, until the priests stood on dry land, and the whole people crossed over. We know all this, and yet we must not think that the object of the Holy Spirit in this psalm was a mere rehearsal of past events, without any idea of like events to happen in the future. Take it not as a history of the past, but rather as a prophecy of things to come. Let us attend, therefore, to the admonition given us, because those events were a figure of us, and those sayings an exhortation to us to recognise ourselves. For if we retain with a firm heart the grace of God given us, we are Israel, the seed of Abraham, as the Apostle says: *Ye are the seed of Abraham* (Gal. iii 29). Let no Christian then consider himself a stranger to the name of Israel. All those things, that were then done by way of figure, are now accomplished in our salvation.

§ 208. *Preface to Psalm cxviii.*

Partly in sermons to the people, partly by dictating to a secretary, I have expounded as I could, by the help of the Lord, all the other psalms in the book of Psalms, called by ecclesiastical custom the Psaltery. But this hundred and eighteenth psalm I kept putting off, not so much on account of its notorious length as for its profundity, known to few. And when any brethren were very distressed that the exposition of this psalm alone should be wanting to our works, I long resisted their requests and behests, because whenever I applied my mind to think of the matter, the task seemed to exceed our ability. The plainer it seems, the deeper it always seems to me, so much so that I could not even show how profound it is. Of other psalms difficult to understand, though the sense be obscure, the obscurity is plain, but in this psalm not even the obscurity. On the surface it may well be believed to need a reader and hearer, but not an interpreter. And now that at last I come to deal with it, I do not know in the least what I shall

be able to make of it; I hope, however, for the aid and assistance of God to enable me to do something. For so he has assisted me in whatever sufficient explanations I have been able to render of texts that seemed to me difficult, and well-nigh impossible to explain. I have resolved to do the work by way of sermons, suitable for deliverance before the people, which the Greeks call homilies. This seems to me the fairer course, that our congregations should not be deprived of the understanding of this psalm also, in the singing of which, as of the other psalms, they are wont to take delight.[1]

A. *Happiness* (*Sermo* i).

Happiness is so great and good that both good and bad men wish for it. No wonder that good men are good in that intent; the wonder is that even bad men are bad that they may be happy. The victim of his passions, corrupted by lust and debaucheries, seeks happiness in that evil plight—thinks himself miserable when he fails to attain the pleasure and enjoyment of his concupiscences, and hesitates not to boast himself happy when he does attain it. The man on fire with covetousness gathers together riches by any and every means, that he may be happy. The seeker after power feeds his cruelty on other folks' sufferings, and in all his crimes is seeking happiness. All these wanderers, looking for false happiness in what is true misery, the divine voice, if only men would listen to it, calls back to the right way, saying: Whither go ye? Ye

[1] An author is scarcely at his best in writing against the grain on a conscientious motive. Conscience cannot command invention. In these thirty-two short dissertations on the cxviiith Psalm, we miss the animation kindled by a living audience. Though written as homilies, there is every indication that they were never delivered as such. Very possibly they are the last productions of St Augustine's pen. A pathetic spectacle! The aged bishop bravely writing to the last, still intent on the instruction of his people when the Vandals were coming! I make these seven extracts.

are going to your doom, and know it not. The way you are going is not the way to the goal you desire to reach. No doubt you want to be happy; but wretched are the roads you are running, and lead to greater wretchedness still. You cannot abandon the wish for happiness, but do give up the malice of a perverse course. In vain do you weary yourselves with your efforts to reach a success which is your defilement when you attain it. They are not happy who are defiled with error, and walk in the perversity of the world; but *blessed are the unspotted in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.*

B. *The praises of men* (*Sermo* xii).

Our duty is to be weighed, not merely by the duty done, but by the end, or motive, for which it is done. In other words, we are to think, not only whether what we do is good, but also and chiefly whether the purpose is good for which we do it. These eyes whereby we contemplate why we do what we do, these eyes it is that the psalmist prays may be turned away that they see not vanity. The chief head of such vanity is the love of human praise, for the sake of which they have done many great deeds who are styled great in this world, and are much praised in the cities of the nations, seeking glory not with God, but with men, and for this end living in the practice of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, and so gaining their reward, the vain reward of vain men. Our Lord, wishing to turn away the eyes of his people from this vanity, says: *See that you do not your righteousness before men*, etc. (Matt. vi 1 *sq.*). Not that human praise is blameworthy,—for what is so desirable for men as that those deeds should please them which they ought to imitate?—but to do good for the mere sake of praise, that is to have a vain motive in one's works. However much praise from men comes in to the righteous man, *that* ought not to be the end and aim of his doing good, but that very praise should be referred to

the praise of God, for whose sake good men do good deeds, because they are not good of themselves, but of him. We should correct the praises of men, and refer all to the praises of God, of whom is given us whatever is praised in us without error on the part of him who praises.

C. *A bishop on the bench* (*Sermo* xxiv).[1]

*Go away from me, ye malignants, and I will search out the commandments of the Lord.* These malignants exercise us in keeping the commandments, but do call us off from searching them out, not only when they persecute us, but even when they pay us obedience and honour, insisting at the same time that we shall occupy ourselves and spend our time in abetting their faulty and troublesome cupidities. We dare not say to them: *Man, who hath appointed me judge or distributor between you?* (Luke xii 14), for the Apostle has appointed churchmen to take cognisance of such cases, discountenancing Christians going to law with one another in a pagan court. We say to them who are not seizing others' property, but keenly striving to recover their own, *Beware of all covetousness* (Luke xii 20); but when we say this, they do not retire or leave us alone, but insist, urge, entreat, clamour, wring it out of us, that we should rather occupy ourselves with them in view of what they love than in searching out the commandments of God which we love. Oh, with what weariness of turbulent crowds, and with what yearning after the divine pronouncements, is it said: *Go away from me, and I will search out.* May they pardon this complaint, the obedient faithful, who rarely have recourse to us for their secular causes, acquiesce most readily in our decisions, and do not weary us out with their litigation, but console us by their docility.

[1] In St Augustine's day, and for a thousand years after, litigants often brought their suits before the bishop even in civil cases.

D. *Servile fear* (*Sermo* xxv).

The fear whereby righteousness is not loved, but punishment feared, is servile, because it is carnal, and therefore does not crucify the flesh; for there still lives the wish to sin, which then appears at work when impunity is hoped for. But when pain is believed likely to follow, the wish to sin lives concealed, still it lives. The man would rather that were lawful which the law forbids, and grieves that it is not lawful, because he takes no spiritual delight in the good of the law, but carnally fears the evil that it threatens. But charity, which casts out this sort of fear (1 John iv 18), fears to sin with a chaste (filial) fear, even though impunity were to follow, because it judges that impunity will not follow, when for love of righteousness it reckons the sin itself to be its own punishment. With such fear the flesh is crucified, inasmuch as these carnal delights, which are vetoed rather than avoided (*vetantur potius quam vitantur*), by the letter of the law, are overcome by delight in the good things of the spirit, and as the victory grows to perfection are destroyed. *Pierce my flesh with thy fear*, that is, give me a chaste (filial) fear, which I have been led on to ask for by that fear of the law whereby I dreaded thy judgements.[1]

E. *Need of grace to keep the law* (*Sermo* xxvii).

*The manifestation of thy words maketh little ones to understand.* Who is the little one but the lowly and weak? Be not proud, presume not on thine own virtue, which is nought, and thou shalt understand why, by a good God, a good law has been given, which still cannot quicken unto life. It was given to this end, to make thee a little one

[1] " Not only is filial (chaste) fear a pious and very holy thing, but even servile fear, where a man does not attain to anything better and more profitable, helps one much to emerge from mortal sin; and after he has emerged from that, the man easily arrives to filial (chaste) fear, which is wholly acceptable and pleasing to God our Lord, because it goes with divine love " (last words of St Ignatius's *Exercises*).

from having been a big man, to teach thee that thou hast not strength of thy own to do what the law commands,[1] but needs must fly to grace and cry: *Have mercy on me, O Lord, because I am weak* (Ps. vi). Yea, Lord, so do thou, merciful Lord, command what cannot possibly be accomplished—or rather, command what can be accomplished only by thy grace, that when men see that they cannot do it of their own strength, every mouth may be stopped, and no man may think himself great. Let all be little ones, and *the whole world be indictable before thee*, because *by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified* (Rom. iii 19). These are the wonderful testimonies which the soul of this little one has searched out, and found, because he has humbled himself and become a little one. *For who doeth thy commandments as they are to be done, that is, by faith worked by charity, unless that very charity be diffused in his heart by the Holy Ghost?* (Gal. v 6; Rom. v 5).[2] *I have opened my mouth* (the psalm goes on), *and drawn in the spirit, because I desired thy commandments.* What did he desire but to do the divine commandments? But there was no means of a weakling doing strong things, or a little one great things; he opened his mouth, confessing that he could not do them of himself, and he drew in the wherewith to do them; he opened his mouth, begging, seeking, knowing; thirsting, he drew in the good spirit, the means of doing what of himself he could not do, *a commandment holy and just and good* (Rom. vii 12).

F. *Crying to the Lord* (*Sermo* xxix).

The crying to the Lord that is done by persons at prayer,[3] if it be done by the sound of the bodily voice, without the

[1] That is, to do it in such perfection as shall avail thee for eternal salvation.

[2] I have italicised this sentence, as being most important for the understanding of St Augustine's apparent depreciation of human nature. It bears out the previous note.

[3] *E.g.*, singing office in choir.

heart being intent on God, who doubts but that it is done in vain? But if it is done with the heart, even with the silence of the bodily voice, it may escape the notice of another man, but not of God. In any case, then, when we pray to God, whether with the bodily voice, when that is necessary, or in silence, we must cry with the heart. Now the cry of the heart is great intentness of thought, expressive of great affection of desire and petition. Then do we cry with the whole heart, when no other thought comes in. With many men such prayers are rare; with few are they frequent; whether in the case of any man all his prayers are such, I do not know.[1] Such a prayer does he mention as his own, who sings this psalm, saying: *I have cried with my whole heart, teach me thy justifications*—surely to be done, not merely known. For there are many who seek out most studiously the sayings of Wisdom, and wish to have them in their doctrine, not in their life; not that by the conduct which Wisdom commands they may arrive at the light of God—which is the essence of wisdom—but that by the speeches which Wisdom delivers they may arrive at the praise of men—which is vainglory. They do not then seek Wisdom even when they seek it, because they do not seek Wisdom itself, otherwise they would live according to it; but they wish to make a great show with the words of Wisdom, and the greater the show they make, the further they are removed from Wisdom.

G. *Meditation before cock-crow* (*Sermo* xxix).

*I have come in betimes at an untimely hour of night with my cries.*[2] If we refer this to the individual faithful, and

[1] Divines distinguish the *intention*, and a twofold *attention;* attention to saying the prayer correctly, and attention to what is said. Where the intention of praying to God is present, and the first sort of attention, the second sort not being positively excluded, there the cry is not "in vain," even though it be not "with the whole heart."

[2] St Augustine read *praeveni intempesta nocte*, for which, he observes, "many manuscripts read *immaturitate*, and hardly one,

to the proper sense expressive of the fact of the case, it often happens that at such an hour of the night the love of God keeps watch, and with strong pressing eagerness for prayer, the usual prayer-time, after cock-crow, is not waited for, but anticipated. But if we take *night* to mean the whole of this life, certainly we cry to God at an untimely hour of the night, and anticipate the ripeness of time, in which he will render us what he has promised, as is read elsewhere: *Let us forestall his face with praise* (Ps. xciv). Or we may choose to understand by the untimely hour of night the time *before the fulness of time came* (Gal. iv 4); in other words, how before the hour was ripe for the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, even then the Church was not silent, but anticipated that fulness of time, and hoped in the word of God, who was able to do what he had promised, that in the seed of Abraham all nations should be blessed.

§ 209. *Left hand and right, temporal and eternal* (Ps. cxx).

I ask your faith, dearly beloved, since you are children of the Church, and have taken your grade in the Church [the baptised], and you I ask who have not yet your grade, but are to take it [the catechumens], and you who have already taken your grade and are to be set in authority in the Church [the clergy, read *praeficiendi*], I ask you, how do you generally understand that saying in the Gospel, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth* (Matt. vi 3)? For if you understand this, you will see what is the meaning of *right hand* and *left hand;* you will understand at the same time that God has made both right and left. By our left hand is meant whatever temporal good we have. By our right hand is meant whatever eternal and

*in immaturitate*," which, he notes, answers to the Greek ἐν ἀωρίᾳ. St Augustine then had a better text than our modern *in maturitate*, a sad blunder. St Augustine on this psalm quotes the Greek with unusual frequency. Perhaps he got some Greek cleric for secretary in his last days, an advantage that one could have wished he had enjoyed before.

everlasting good the Lord promises us. But if he who will give life everlasting is the same who comforts our present life with these temporal good things, then the same Creator has made both right hand and left hand. A psalm says of certain people: *Whose mouth has uttered vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity* (Ps. cxliii).[1] He found, then, some to blame, some who took the real right hand for the left, and made their real left hand their right; he goes on to explain who these are. Every man who thinks there is no happiness except in the affluence and abundance of this world, that man is a fool and a wrong-headed, in making his left hand his right. Such they were of whom the psalm goes on to speak, *whose sons*, etc.; not that they had not received from God even their temporal possessions, but because they thought that that alone was happiness, and sought no other. The Bride in the Canticles says of her Spouse: *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me* (Cant. ii 6). If it is the left, be it the left, yet so that it be *under the head;* above it be thy head—that is, above it be thy faith, where Christ dwells. Prefer not temporal things to thy faith, and the left hand shall not be above thy head. Subject all temporal things to thy faith, and prefer thy faith to all temporal things: so shall his left hand be under thy head, and duly his right hand shall embrace thee. Persecutors raged against Crispina, whose feast we keep to-day.[2] It was a wealthy and delicate woman they raged against, but she was strong, because the Lord was her covering on her right hand: he it was who guarded her. Who is there in Africa, brethren, who does not know Crispina? A high-born woman of fashion, with plenty of money, but all these advantages were the

[1] What follows in this psalm, cxliii, *whose sons are as new plantations*, etc., is referred by moderns to the prosperity of the righteous, by St Augustine to that of the wicked on earth. I prefer St Augustine.

[2] A martyr at Thebesta in Africa. Her feast is kept on December 5.

left hand—they were *under the head.* The enemy came to strike the head,[1] and the left hand felt his blow.[2] That was *under the head.* The head was above, the right hand from above was embracing her. What could the persecutor do, even to a delicate woman? She was weak by her sex, and by her riches perhaps still more enfeebled, and by her bodily habits; but what was that to such strong protection? What to the Spouse who was putting the left hand under her head, and with his right hand embracing her? How could the enemy strike at one so fortified? Yet strike he did, but at her body. *The Lord keep thy soul*, the psalm says. The soul yielded not, the body was struck. Even the body was struck only for a time, for in the end it is to rise again.

A short psalm, but a long dissertation! Imagine, brethren, that I have invited you to dinner on occasion of the feast of blessed Crispina, and have lengthened out the entertainment beyond due measure. Might not the same fate have befallen you, if some military magnate had invited you, and forced you at table to drink without end? Allow us then to do this over the divine word, that you may drink to the full, as the Lord also has been pleased to water the earth with his temporal rain, thereby to enable us to go with greater joy to the shrine of the Martyrs, as we promised yesterday.

§ 210. *Desire of heaven* (Ps. cxxi).

As impure love sets the soul on fire, and invites her to the desire and pursuit of earthly and perishable objects, herself to perish with them, so holy love lifts up the soul, fires her with desire of eternity, raises her from the depth of hell to heaven. Every love has its own force: love cannot be idle in the heart of the lover, it must lead. Would you know what manner of love it be? See whither it

[1] To attack Crispina's faith.
[2] *I.e.*, he was able to strike at her worldly advantages.

leads. We do not admonish you to love nothing; but we admonish you not to love the world, that you may freely love him who made the world. The soul, encumbered with earthly love, has a sort of birdlime on her wings. She cannot fly. But, once cleansed from the sordid affections of the world, she spreads her feathers and her two wings free—that is, the two precepts of love of God and love of our neighbour—and soars aloft. From the midst of scandals, from contact with wicked men, she is sent to fly there where she shall no longer have to endure the company of any wicked one, but shall live in the holy society of angels, citizens of the everlasting Jerusalem. You may call to mind, brethren, how when there is a feast of martyrs at hand, and some place named to which crowds are wont to resort to celebrate the solemnity, people rouse one another. "Let us go, let us go." "Where are we to go?" "To such and such a place, a holy place." By their mutual talking they set one another on fire, and their fire makes all one blaze; they hurry on to the holy place, and the holy idea goes to make them holy. If, then, a holy desire carries people with such a rush to a temporal place, what should that desire be which carries us in harmony to heaven! Therefore let us run, let us run, because *we shall go into the house of the Lord.* Let us run and not be fatigued, because we shall arrive there where we shall know no fatigue. Let us run into the house of the Lord; let our soul be glad in the things they tell us of it. They who tell us these things have first seen that home, and cry from afar to us who are coming after. In that house and home the Lord is praised, who built the house. He is the delight of all who dwell in the house: he, our only hope here, is our enjoyment there.

§ 211. *Our ascension with Christ* (Ps. cxxii).

Every love either ascends or descends. By good desire we are raised to God, by evil desire we are thrown headlong

into the depths. But seeing that we have fallen by evil desire, it remains for us to seek One who has not fallen, but descended to us, and to ascend by clinging to him, because we cannot ascend of our own strength. *No man ascendeth into heaven but he who hath descended from heaven* (John iii 13). He seems to speak of himself, alone. Is it, then, that the rest have stayed below, because he alone has ascended who alone descended? What are the rest to do? To be united to his Body, that there may be one Christ, descending and ascending. He descended as Head; he ascends with a Body, clothed with his Church. When we are so with him, we are in him as his members; and he is with us, and therefore one, and ever one. Unity binds us up in one.[1] And they alone do not ascend with him who have refused to be one with him. He who is seated in heaven, and immortal in the resurrection of his flesh, that flesh whereby he was for a time mortal—he who in heaven suffers no persecution, no malicious affronts and reproaches, such as he deigned to endure on earth for us—he, I say, still had compassion for his Body, labouring on earth, and said, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* (Acts ix 4). No one was touching him, and yet he cries from heaven that he is suffering persecution. This gives us ground not to be without hope—nay, to presume with all assurance—that if by charity he is with us on earth, by the same charity also we are with him in heaven. But how is it shown that we are with him in heaven? By what the Apostle Paul says: *Ye are risen with Christ, your life is hidden with Christ in God* (Col. iii 1). Therefore he is still below, and we are already above.

§ 212. *Self-dissatisfaction* (Ps. cxxii).

Every proud man attends to himself, thinks himself a great man, is pleased with himself. But who is pleased

[1] *Unitas compaginat uni*, a text for unity of Church communion and government, against schism. And if you think that Augustine looked for unity of charity only, read him on the Donatists.

with himself is pleased with a foolish man: he plays the fool when he is pleased with himself. He alone pleases safely who pleases God. And who is it that pleases God? He who is pleased with God.[1] God cannot be displeased with himself; let him be pleasing also to thee, that thou mayest please him. But he cannot be pleasing to thee, unless thou art displeasing to thyself.[2] But if thou displeasest thyself, take thy eye off thyself. Why dost thou attend to thyself? If thou attendest truly to thyself, thou findest in thyself something to displease thee, and sayest to God: *My sin is ever before me* (Ps. l). Let thy sin be before thee, that it be not before God; and be thou not before thyself, that thou mayest be before God.

§ 213. *God's dwelling in us* (Ps. cxxii).

*Thou who dwellest in heaven.* What is the heaven of God? All holy and righteous souls. But someone says: Before God made the saints, where did he dwell? God dwelt in himself, God dwelt by himself, and by himself is God. And when he deigns to dwell in the saints, the saints are the house of God, yet not so that God must fall if that house is taken away. God does not dwell in the saints as we dwell in a house. You dwell in a house: if it is taken away, down you come; but God's dwelling in the saints is such that, if he goes away, down they come. Whoever, therefore, so carries God as to be the temple of God, let him not think that his carrying of God means that God is frightened of his withdrawing himself from him. Woe to him if he does withdraw himself, for it is he himself that falls. God ever abides in himself. The houses in which we dwell, they contain us: the houses in which God

[1] So also on Ps. xxxvi, cnarr. 2: *ille placet Deo, cui placet Deus*, a great secret.

[2] In other words, the self-satisfied man, who feels no deficiency in himself, does not want God. That is the danger of riches and honours, that they make a man self-satisfied, the reverse of poor in spirit.

dwells, he contains them. So God dwells in heaven, needing no heaven to dwell in, but heaven needs him to be dwelt in by him.

§ 214. *The reproach of unworldliness* (Ps. cxxii).

*We are bespattered with contempt.* All who would live piously according to Christ must suffer reproaches, must be despised by those who have no mind to live piously, whose whole happiness is earthly. They who speak of a happiness which cannot be seen with the eyes are laughed at. "Madman," it is said to him, "why do you believe? Do you see what you believe? Has anyone ever come back to you from the world below, and reported what goes on there? Look at me; what I love, I see and enjoy." You are despised because you hope in what you see not; he despises you, thinking to have a firm hold on what he sees. See if he has a firm hold on it. What he holds slips away from him, or he slips away from it. He must either drift away from his property, or his property drift away from him. Who is the man whose property drifts away from him? He who is ruined in his lifetime. Who is the man who drifts away from his property? He who dies in his riches, because, when he dies, he does not take them with him to the world below. "I have my own house," he boasts. You ask: "What do you call your own house?" "What my father left me." "And how did he come by that house?" "Our grandfather left it to him." Carry back to great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, and now you are no longer able to quote names. Are you not rather frightened to observe that many owners have drifted through that house, and not one of them has been able to carry it to his everlasting home? Your father here left it, he drifted through, so shall you also drift through. If, therefore, you have a succession in your house, it is an inn of passing travellers, not a home where people stay. And yet, because we aspire to a future felicity, and *it hath not yet appeared what we shall*

*be*, though *we are already sons of God* (1 John ii 12), we are *bespattered with contempt* by those who seek and find felicity in this world.

§ 215. *Critics of God's ways* (Ps. cxxii).

One man abounds in money, and is proud of that; another abounds in honours, and is proud of them; a third thinks himself to abound in righteousness, and is proud of that—which is worse. They who do not think that they abound in money, think that they abound in righteousness, in just claims against God: so in their calamities they justify themselves against God, and say: "What have I committed? What have I done?" And you say: "Look back, remember your sins, see if you have done nothing." The man's conscience is tickled a little; he returns to himself, and thinks of his evil deeds. Still, even so he does not wish to confess that he deserves what he suffers, but says: "There, I have done many things, that's plain, but I see many folk do worse things, and come to no harm for it." He is a stickler for justice, against God. He abounds in it himself, his breast is full of justice, and he thinks himself unjustly treated. Give him a ship to steer, and he would lose himself and his vessel; but now he wishes to examine the Almighty as to the steering of this world, himself to take the helm of creation, and distribute to all their share of sorrows and joys, punishments and rewards. Unhappy soul, he abounds in wickedness, and all the more abounds in wickedness in proportion as he seems to himself to abound in righteousness.

§ 216. *Devoured alive* (Ps. cxxiii).

*Unless the Lord had been in us, perchance they would have devoured us alive.* They would not have first killed and then devoured. O monstrous cruelty! Not so does the Church devour. *Kill and eat*, it was said to Peter (Acts x 13), not *Devour alive*. How then does Peter—that is, the

Church—kill and eat? Because no one is received into the body of the Church unless he be first slain. That which was of him dies, that he may be that which he was not. A pagan comes, idolatry still lives in him; he has to be inserted among the members of Christ; to be inserted, he must be eaten; but he cannot be eaten by the Church unless he is first killed. Let him renounce the world, then he is killed. Let him believe in God, then he is eaten. How then about the text, *they would have devoured us alive, unless the Lord had been in us?* They are devoured alive who know a thing to be evil, and yet consent to it with their tongue. Persecutors have arisen and said to men: Offer incense [to idols]; if you do not, we kill you. And men have shut out God from their hearts, and been devoured alive, offering incense to idols, knowing all the while that *an idol is nought* (1 Cor. viii 5). For if they thought that an idol was something, they would be devoured dead; but now that they reckon that an idol is nothing, and know that all those rites of the Gentiles are vain and foolish, they live; and still doing what their persecutors wish, they are devoured alive.

§ 217. *Why rich and poor* (Ps. cxxiv).

They are wrong-headed men (*pravicordes*) who sit and debate on what God ought to have done, not praising but blaming what he has done. It is not enough that they refuse his correction of them; they wish to correct him. They say: God ought not to have made the poor: there ought to have been rich men only; they alone should live. Why was the poor man made? What does he live for? A ready answer may be returned, dearly beloved. God made the poor to prove the man; and God made the rich to prove the rich by the poor.[1] And all that God has done,

[1] *Fecit Deus pauperem ut probet hominem; et fecit Deus divitem ut probet illum de paupere.* The meaning appears to be, that the poor man is proved by bearing his hard lot cheerfully, and the rich man is proved by his behaviour to the poor.

he has done right. And if we cannot see his purpose, why he did this so and that so, it is good for us to submit ourselves to his wisdom and believe that he has done well, though we do not as yet know why he has done it.

§ 218. *The heresiarch, a genius gone astray* (Ps. cxxiv).

Think not, brethren, that heresies could ever have been set on foot by small minds. Only great men have been successful in starting heresies; mountains they were, as bad as they were great. They were not mountains to *take up peace*, they took up dissension instead, gotten of their father the devil. Mountains they were, but such mountains do you take care not to touch.[1] Men are likely to come and say to you: "A great man that, and that other a great man; what a man was Donatus! What a man is Maximian! And that fellow Plotinus, what a genius! And the celebrated Arius!" All these I have named were mountains, but mountains of shipwreck. See what a flame of eloquence blazes from them. If you are steering your bark, and are caught in the night and darkness of this life, let them not deceive you, steer not in their direction —that way lie great rocks and shipwrecks. When those mountains are recommended to you, and you are for the moment advised to recur to them for aid, and rest there, reply: *I trust in the Lord, how is it ye say to my soul, Pass over to the mountains like a sparrow?* (Ps. x). The sparrow is a fickle thing, lightly flying hither and thither. But do you trust in the Lord, and you shall be as Mount Sion.

§ 219. *A summary of Christianity* (Ps. cxxv).

This is one of the psalms called "gradual," *canticum graduum*, a song of steps. It is a cry of people mounting up—whither but to that Jerusalem above, the mother of

[1] For *cave ne fugias*, just the opposite to what St Augustine wished to say, read *cave ne tangas*: cf. *qui tangit montes et fumigant* (Ps. ciii).

us all, which is in heaven, above and everlasting? The Jerusalem that was on earth was the figure thereof. That earthly Jerusalem has fallen, the other remains; the one has run through the time during which the Word was to be preached in it, the other holds fast the eternity of our redemption. From that Jerusalem we are pilgrims in this life, and we sigh after our return to it, unhappy and distressed until we do return. Nor have the angels, our fellow-citizens, abandoned us on our pilgrimage, but have announced the King himself as about to come to us. And come he has, and was despised by us, and afterwards with us, and taught us to be despised, because he was despised; taught us to endure, because he endured; taught us to suffer, because he suffered; promised us that we should rise again, because he rose again; showing in his own person what we should expect. If then, brethren, before our Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh, before he died, rose again and ascended into heaven, the prophets of old, our fathers, were still sighing after that city, how much we ought to desire to go there where he has gone before us, and whence he never departed, for in coming to us the Lord did not forsake the angels. He stayed with them, and came to us; he stayed with them in majesty, and came to us in flesh. Where were we then? If he came as our Redeemer, then we were held captive. Captive among barbarians? The devil and his angels are worse than any barbarians. They held the human race captive, and from them he redeemed us, giving for our ransom not gold and silver, but his own blood.[1]

§ 220. *Mutual aid society* (Ps. cxxv).

Sometimes a rich man is found poor, and a boon is conferred upon him by the poor. A man comes to a river,

[1] This must not be pressed to mean that the ransom was paid to the devil, an erroneous notion which obtained currency in the early Middle Ages.

all the more delicate he for being rich. He cannot cross. If he were to strip for the crossing, he might catch cold, take to his bed, and die. A poor man comes up, in better bodily training ; he carries the rich man across, and does an alms to the rich man. Therefore, do not reckon them alone poor who have no money. See the side on which any neighbour is poor; on that side, it may be, you are rich and able to accommodate him. You may lend him the service of your limbs, and do more for him than if you lent him money. He needs counsel, you are full of counsel; in counsel he is poor, you rich. Yours is no labour, no loss; you give counsel, and have given alms. Just now, my brethren, while we speak, you are as it were poor in regard of us; and from what God has vouchsafed to give us, we thence give to you. We all receive from him, who alone is rich. So then does the Body of Christ hold itself together; the fellow-members are welded together and united in the bond of peace, while everyone puts what he has at the service of him who has it not; in what he has, he is rich; in what he has not, he is poor. Do not attend to yourselves alone, but attend to the needy about you. But do not flag because all this has to be done with labour and hardship in this life. You sow in tears, you shall reap in joy.[1]

§ 221. *A temporal reward* (Ps. cxxvii).

We must be careful that this psalm turn not to scandal rather than to edification. *Thus shall the man be blessed, who feareth the Lord.* How ? In that his wife is to be as a fertile vineyard,[2] on the sides of his house, and his children to surround his table like young olive-plants ? Have they then lost their reward, who for God's sake have

[1] Who shall persuade employer and employed of this ? And until this essential piece of Christianity is put into them, where shall there be harmony between them ?

[2] *Vinea;* so St Augustine, but the true reading is *vitis*, " vine."

refused marriage? What evils have the martyrs endured, what torments, filthy prisons, confinement in chains, cruelty of wild beasts, flames of fire! Would they have endured all this, had they not had a goal before their eyes which was no part of the felicity of this world?[1]

§ 222. *Stiff-necked sinners* (Ps. cxxviii).

He did not say, the just Lord shall slash the hands of sinners, or the feet of sinners, but because he wished proud sinners to be understood in this phrase, and all the proud are stiff-necked, therefore he said, *shall slash the necks of sinners*. Such sinners not only do evil, but they will not acknowledge what they do, and when they are scolded, they justify themselves. "See, you have done it, at least acknowledge what you have done; God hates the sinner, do you hate him too; unite yourself with God, do you and your master join in prosecuting your offence." "No," quoth he, "I have done well, God has done ill."[2] "How do you mean?" "I've done nothing wrong; Saturn has done it, Mars has done it, Venus has done it; I've done nothing, my stars have done it." You justify yourself, you accuse God who made the stars; you put yourself out of fault, and God in fault; by your doings against the Word of God, there comes upon you the Scripture saying: *The just Lord shall slash the necks of sinners*.

[1] In St Augustine's pictures all the colours are strong; there is no melting away of one hue into another. His argument is uncompromising, unqualified, without allowance for the opposite. Would he exalt grace? Then down with nature. Would he show that the proper happiness of the Christian man is in the life to come? Then the Christian must look for no happiness in this world; all his happiness is in hope (*spe*), nothing in present realisation (*re*). But it is incontestable that this Psalm cxxvii does refer immediately to temporal prosperity. Such prosperity (again incontestably) is a good thing in its own order; and is not unfrequently bestowed by God for a season as a temporal reward upon the families of his faithful servants. But see § 249.

[2] Which means: "I have only followed my nature, and fallen in with my environment: Providence is to blame for giving me such a nature, and placing me in such environment."

§ 223. *The grass growing on the roof* (Ps. cxxviii).

This [*foenum tectorum*] is the grass that grows on roofs, on a tiled surface exposed to the sun. It appears high up, but has no root. Much better a lowlier position with a richer show of verdure. The grass is not yet plucked, and already it is withered. The reapers come, but fill not their arms with it. You know, brethren, how it is customary, when you pass among labourers in the fields, to say, *The Lord's blessing be upon you.* This custom was more prevalent among the Jews. No one passed and saw any work going on in the fields without invoking a blessing on it; it was not lawful to pass by otherwise. Now *the reapers are the angels* (Matt. xiii 39). Who are the passers by? They who have passed by this way of life hence to their country. The apostles and prophets were such passers by. Whom did they bless? Those in whom they saw a root of charity. But as for those whom they saw high up, on roofs, and proud, arching their necks,[1] they told them what was to become of them, and gave them no blessing.

§ 224. *Out of the depths* (Ps. cxxix).

When a man is crying out of the depths, he is rising out of the depths; that very cry does not permit him to lie long in the lowest depth. Very much in the depths are they who do not even cry out of the depths. The Scriptures say: *When the sinner has come into the depths of evil, he is contemptuous*[2] (Prov. xviii 3). See, brethren, what a depth that is where God is despised. Where one sees himself overwhelmed with daily sins, crushed, as it were, under heaps and piles of iniquity, he laughs if anything is said to him about asking God. "If sins were displeasing

[1] *In crassa cervice scuti sui* (Job xv 26). I have omitted the *shield* as being less well in place here.

[2] *Contumacious* is the canonical word. Contumacy is punished by excommunication.

to God, should I be alive? If God cared for human affairs, with all the crimes that I have committed, should I be not only alive but prosperous?" This is their usual posture who are far down in the depths, and prosper in their iniquities. The happier they seem to themselves, all the deeper are they plunged in the depths; their fallacious felicity is their greater infelicity. Another thing these men are wont to say: "I have now done many things, and damnation is imminent; I lose whatever I do not do, when I am able to do it." In the same way desperate robbers speak: "If the judge is going to condemn me to death for ten murders just as much as for five or for one, why not do any job that comes in my way?" But our Lord Jesus Christ, who did not despise our depths, who deigned to condescend to this life of ours, promising us forgiveness of all our sins, has roused man even from the depths to cry out even from those depths under the heavy pile of his sins, and has ensured the sinner's cry reaching God.

§ 225. *Christ's resurrection ours* (Ps. cxxix).

There are those who say: "I see the Lord has risen; does it follow that I should have any hope of the possibility of my rising again?" Yes, it does follow. The Lord has risen again in that nature which he has got from you. He could not rise, had he not been dead; nor could he have died but for his bearing a body of flesh. What did the Lord get from you? A Body of Flesh. What was he himself when he came? The Word that was before all, through whom all things were made. But by way of taking something of you, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us. He took of you something to offer for you, just as the priest takes of you something to offer for you, when you wish to appease God for your sins.[1] Our

[1] The people used to offer at the Offertory in the Mass the bread and wine to be used at the sacrifice, and other gifts in kind.

Priest has taken flesh of us; in that same flesh he has been made our victim, our holocaust, our sacrifice. Our sacrifice in his Passion, in his Resurrection he renewed what was slain, and presented it as your first-fruits to God, saying: "All you have is consecrated, now that such first-fruits on your part have been presented to God; hope, therefore, that that shall be accomplished in your hereafter which has gone before in your first-fruits."[1]

§ 226. *Praying in the temple* (Ps. cxxx).

We have often advised Your Charity that the voice of the psalmist should be taken, not as the voice of one man, but as the voice of all who are in Christ—many in themselves, but one in him who is one. The same is also the temple of God, as the Apostle says: *The temple of God is holy, which ye are*—all who believe in Christ, and believing, love. This is believing in Christ, loving Christ, not believing as the devils believed without loving (Jas. ii 19), and saying, therefore, for all their belief: *What have we to do with thee, Son of God?* (Matt. viii 31). Instead of saying, *What have we to do with thee?* we should rather say, "To thee we belong, thou hast redeemed us." All, then, who so believe are as living stones, of which the temple of God is built, and as that incorruptible wood of which the ark was put together, that could not sink in the deluge. These very men make up that temple wherein God is petitioned and hears. Whoever prays to God away from the temple of God, is not heard to the granting of that peace of the heavenly Jerusalem, though he is heard to the granting of certain temporal gifts which God has bestowed even on pagans, for even the devils were heard in their prayers to go into the swine (Matt. viii 51). It is quite another thing to be heard to the obtaining of life everlasting; that is granted only to him who prays in the

[1] Allusion to 1 Cor. xv 23: *Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming,* in the general resurrection.

temple of God. He prays in the temple of God, who prays in the peace of the Church, in the unity of the Body of Christ, which body of Christ is made up of the multitude of believers all the world over.

§ 227. *Brother holpen by brother* (Ps. cxxx).

See, brethren, in our members how all and each have their several offices. The eye sees and hears not; the ear hears and sees not; the hand works, and neither hears nor sees; the foot walks, and neither hears, nor sees, nor does what the hand does. But in our body, provided there be health and no strife among the members, the ear sees in the eye; the eye hears in the ear, nor can it be objected to the ear that it does not see. Questioned as to its ability to see and discern colours, the ear replies: " I am where the eye is; in myself I see not, but I see in that wherewith I am one; the eye sees for me." The eye says: " The ear hears for me." Eyes and ears say: " The hands work for us." The hands say: " Eyes and ears see and hear for us." Eyes and ears and hands say: " The feet walk for us." All the members in the one body work together and rejoice together. And if there be any trouble in our members, the rest do not desert it, but sympathise. Though the eyes are high up, and the feet below, yet if the foot happens to tread on a thorn, do the eyes desert it ? No, the whole body is drawn together, the backbone is bent, the man sits down, all to search for the thorn that has stuck in the sole of the foot. All the members do whatever they can for the drawing out of the thorn that has stuck in one small place, lowest down. Thus then, brethren, whoever is unable to raise the dead, let him not seek to do that, but let him seek means not to be a source of discord in the body.

§ 228. *Paul's infirmity* (Ps. cxxx).

You see, brethren, the vogue that the Apostle Paul's letters have in the Church, above his fellow-apostles. The others did not write, but only spoke in the Church. As for

the letters that mistaken men put forth in the name of the apostles, they are rejected by the Church, because they are not genuine. As for other apostles who have written, they have not written so much nor with such grace as Paul. Yet what says he? Attend, it is a tremendous thing I am saying to you. *Lest for the greatness of revelations I should be lifted up, there was given me a thorn*[1] *in my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me* (2 Cor. xii 7). What is this, brethren? Lest he should be lifted up as a strong man, he is buffeted like a boy. And by whom? By an angel of Satan. So he is given over to some bodily pain, which vexes him grievously. Now bodily pains are often sent by an angel of Satan; but those evil spirits cannot send them unless they are permitted. So was holy Job tried. The foul spirit was permitted, the saint was proved. The devil little knows how much good comes of his doing, even when he rages. The apostle was undergoing a cure; and because the physician's application was painful to the patient, the patient asked the physician to take it away. When a doctor applies to the flesh some painful and burning plaster for the cure of a patient suffering from some internal inflammation, as soon as the patient begins to burn and be tormented by the remedy, he asks the doctor to take it away, but the doctor comforts him, admonishing him of the need of patience, because he knows how salutary the application is. Hear the voice of the Physician: *My grace is enough for thee, for virtue is made perfect in infirmity.*[2] I know my own application; I know the source of thine illness, and the means of thy cure.

§ 229. *How God was crucified* (Ps. cxxx).

Because the Word was made flesh, that same Word also was crucified; but the Word was not changed into man,

[1] The Latin *stimulus* is misleading. Paul was not stimulated but depressed by his infirmity; *cf.* Gal. iv 13, 14; 1 Cor. ii 3. St Augustine's interpretation is to be noticed.

[2] The Greek says: *My power is brought out in* [*human*] *weakness*

man was changed in it.[1] Man was changed in it, to become better than he was (as man), yet not so as to be changed into the very substance of the Word. By the fact of his being Man, God died; and by the fact of his being God, he rose again and ascended into heaven. Whatever man suffered, it cannot be said that God did not suffer, because God was man by assumption of human nature, but he was not changed into man.[2] In like manner you cannot say that you have not suffered injury, if your dress is rent. You do not say, "he rent my cloak," but "he rent me." If your dress might properly be called you, though it is not you, but only your dress, with how much more propriety might the Flesh of Christ, the Temple of the Word, united with the Word, be so spoken of that, whatever suffering there was in that Flesh, God himself should be said to suffer it; although the Word could neither die, nor decay, nor be altered or slain, but whatever it suffered, it suffered in the flesh.[3]

§ 230. *A monastery, one soul and one heart in many bodies* (Ps. cxxxii).

When you very properly assail the heretics [Donatists] on the score of their Circellions, that they may blush for them and be saved, they assail you on the score of our monks. Are the two to be compared? It would be a comparison of drunkards with sober men, of hasty with considerate men, of madmen with honest men, of vagrants

[1] In it, but not into it.

[2] *Deus erat hominem assumendo homo.* St Augustine died in A.D. 430, the very year of the Council of Ephesus, which condemned Nestorius, whose heresy of two Christs probably never reached his ears. Nevertheless, he writes here the condemnation of Nestorianism. The fierce dispute between St Cyril and Theodoret might have been obviated, had they read over together this passage of Augustine, which I believe they would both have subscribed.

[3] The sum of it is: God was crucified in the flesh, or according to the flesh. The Man of flesh and blood, who was crucified on Calvary, was God, and in him God was crucified.

with men living in community. But they are wont to say: "What is the meaning of this name of Monks?" Much better we say: "What is the meaning of this name of Circellions?" I dare say, we clip the name. Shall I tell you their full name? They are called Circumcellions, not Circellions. They are called Circumcellions because they wander round the cells (*circum cellas*).[1] Their manner is to go here and there, having no fixed abode, doing things that you know, and that they [the Donatists] know too, willy nilly. But they go on to say: "Our people are not called Circumcellions; that is an opprobrious name which you give them." They call them Agonistics. A very honest name, if the reality corresponded. They say to us: "Show us where the name of Monks (*Monachi*) comes in Scripture."[2] Let them show us where the name of Agonistics comes in Scripture. "We call them," they say, "from the word *agon*, because they fight, and the Apostle says, *I have fought the good fight* (ἀγῶνα ἠγώνισμαι: 2 Tim. iv 7). Because, then, they are people who fight against the devil, and prevail, these soldiers of Christ are called Agonistics." Would that they were soldiers of Christ, and not soldiers of the devil, whose *Praise be to God*[3] is more dreaded than the roaring of a lion. They dare to insult us, because the brethren (monks), when they see people, say *Deo gratias*. What is this *Deo gratias?* they ask. Are you so deaf as not to know what *Deo gratias* is? He who says *Deo gratias* renders thanks to God. See whether a brother ought not to render thanks to God when he sees a brother. Is it not matter of congratulation when those who dwell in Christ see one another? And yet you laugh at our *Deo gratias*, when all the world weeps over

[1] Committing crimes of homicide, often of suicide. This violent branch of Donatists, called *Circumcelliones*, brought the whole sect under the chastisement of the Imperial Government.

[2] Just what the Protestants say of "Transubstantiation," "Purgatory," etc. Add "Trinity"—and "Protestant."

[3] The Circumcellion war-whoop.

your *Deo laudes*.[1] But certainly you have given a good account of the name, why you call them Agonistics. Be it so as you call them; be it so, we are quite favourable. The Lord grant that they may fight against the devil, and not against Christ, whose Church they persecute. Still, because they do fight you call them Agonistics, and you have found authority for calling them so in the Apostle's words, *I have fought the good fight*. Why should not we call our people *Monachi*, since the psalmist says: *See how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell in one!* For μόνος[2] means *one*—not *one* anyhow, for a man in a crowd is one man; he may be called one man in a multitude (*unus cum multis*), but not μόνος, that is, *alone*, for μόνος means, one man *alone by himself*. They who so live *in one* as to make *one man*, and verify in themselves what is written, *one heart and soul* (Acts iv 32)[3]—many bodies, but not many souls; many bodies, but not many hearts—they are rightly called μόνος, that is, one alone (*unus solus*).[4]

§ 231. *Goodness of God* (Ps. cxxxiv).

Ineffable sweetness comes over me when I hear, *The Lord is good*. Good he is, not needing other things to make him good, fearing no evil to diminish his goodness. I find in creation the sky good, the sun good, the moon good, the stars good, the earth good, the things that walk and move good, the things that fly in the air and swim in the waters good. I speak also of a good man, a good angel, who has

[1] *Praise be to God*. With these Circumcellions compare "Praise-God Barebones" and the like fanatics of Cromwell's time.

[2] Whence μοναχός, a *solitary*. St Augustine ingeniously argues that a monk in community is still all by himself, because the community are all as one man.

[3] *Cor et anima una* is the right reading. St Augustine has *una anima et unum cor*.

[4] So in a divided religious house, the individual is *unus cum multis;* in a united community he is *unus solus*.

not fallen by pride and become a devil. All these things I call good, but with the addition of their names—good *sky*, good *angel*, good *man*. But when I turn to God, I think there is nothing better that I can say than simply *good*. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself said: *A good man from the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good* (Matt. xii 35). And yet he said: *None is good but God alone* (Mark x 18). Did he not prompt us thereby to seek and distinguish what is the good that is good by another good, and what is the good that is good by itself? How good, then, is that from which all things are good![1]

§ 232. *Sweetness of God* (Ps. cxxxiv).

*Praise the Lord, because he is good: sing to his name, because he is sweet.* Possibly he might be good and not sweet, if he did not give thee the means of tasting him. It was too much for thee to taste the sweetness of God, because that was far away and too high, whereas thou wert abject and grovelling on the earth. In view of this great separation there was sent a Mediator. Being man, thou couldst not make up to God. God was made man, that through man thou mightest make up to God; and *there was made a Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Tim. ii 5); since as man thou art able to make up to man, though thou couldst not make up to God. But if he were only man, thou wouldst never arrive at God by following that which thou art thyself. On the other hand, if he were only God, thou wouldst never arrive, not grasping that which thou art not. Thus God was made man, that by following man, a thing thou art able to do, thou mightest arrive at God, a thing thou wert not able to do. He is the Mediator, thence is he made sweet. What is sweeter than the Bread of Angels? For man does not live on one food, and angel on another. It is one very Truth, one very Wisdom, one very Power of God; but thou art not able to

[1] Plato's Ideal of Goodness (*Republic*, VI, 508E); *cf.* § 6.

enjoy it as the angels enjoy it. How do they enjoy it? As it is in itself. *In the beginning was the Word*, etc. How dost thou attain it? Because *the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us*. That man might eat the Bread of angels, the Creator of angels was made man. *Sing ye therefore to his name, because he is sweet.*

§ 233. *God our God* (Ps. cxxxiv).

You were striving hard, I dare say, to see the Good of all goods, the Good of whom are all goods, the Good without which nothing is good, the Good which is good apart from the rest of good things. This you were striving hard to see, and perchance you were straining your mind's eye in the effort. That I conjecture from myself, such is my case. But if there is anyone, as there very well may be, of stronger mental vision than I am, and he has long fixed his heart's gaze on *that which is*, let him praise as he can, and praise as we cannot. Thanks be to him, however, who in this psalm has tempered his praise, so that it may be the praise both of strong and weak. He said to his servant Moses, *I am who am*, and *thou shalt say to the children of Israel, He who is hath sent me to you*. But because such sheer Being was difficult for the human mind to grasp; and Moses was being sent as a man to men, though not sent by man; God at once tempered his praise, and said that which could be sweetly grasped. He would not stop at a point of praise beyond what the praiser could reach. *Go and tell the children of Israel: the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob hath sent me to you.* "The *I who am*," he says, "belongs to me; but *the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob* belongs to thee. And if thou failest to grasp what I am in myself, grasp what I am to thee."[1]

[1] Or more strictly, "what thou art to me," for God is not "really related" to his creatures. In other words, what St Augustine says is: "If you cannot grasp God as he is *transcendent*

§ 234. *Creation a free act* (Ps. cxxxiv).

He was not obliged to make all things that he has made, but *all things whatsoever he hath willed, he has made.*[1] You build a house, because if you would not build one, you would be left without a dwelling; necessity, not free choice, obliges you to build a house. You plant a hill with vines, and sow a field, otherwise you would have no food. All these are works of necessity; but God makes things out of sheer goodness, needing nothing that he has made. Can we find anything that we do of free choice? Certainly we can; we find it in the case when we praise God with love. This you do of free choice; when you praise what you love, not of necessity, but because it pleases. Hence to just and holy men God has been pleasing, even when he was scourging them. He pleased them, when he was displeasing all the wicked. Under his scourge, in hardship, in labours, in wounds, in want, they praised God; even in tormenting them he did not displease them. Thy very highest reward shall be God himself; and so thou oughtest to love, not ceasing to desire him for thy reward who alone is capable of satisfying thee, as Philip desired when he said, *Show us the Father, and it is enough for us* (John xiv 8).

§ 235. *Rivers of Babylon* (Ps. cxxxvi).

The rivers of Babylon are all things that are here loved, and pass away. Someone, for example, has taken a liking for agriculture, thinking thereby to grow rich, to find occupation for his mind and pleasure. Let him look to

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and absolute, try to grasp him as he is *immanent* in creation. We cannot grasp him properly either way, and this combination of Transcendence and Immanence is a mystery beyond all human comprehension. We comprehend only that somehow it must be, or God would not be God.

[1] This is the Scripture doctrine of Creation, opposed to Hindu and Hegelian pantheistic Emanation.

the end of it, and see that what he has loved is not a foundation of Jerusalem, but a river of Babylon. Another says: "It is a great thing to be a soldier; all husbandmen fear the army men, bow to them, tremble before them; if I be an army man, I shall be feared by the farmer." Madman, you have thrown yourself into another river of Babylon, and that more muddy and engulfing than the former. You wish to be feared by a man under you: fear the man over you; he who now fears you may suddenly become your superior; he whom you cannot but fear will never be your subject. "A grand thing it is," says another, "to be a barrister, eloquence is most powerful, to have one's clients in all things hanging on the lips of their eloquent counsel, and expecting from his mouth losses or gains, death or life, ruin or deliverance." You do not know what you are in for; this is another river of Babylon, and with great noise the roaring of the water beats the rocks. Mark how it flows, mark how it glides away; and if you mark how it flows and glides, beware how it carries things off. "To go to sea," says another, "and trade is a grand thing, to know many provinces, to make money everywhere, not to stay in a city subject to the whim of any magnate, to be always on one's travels, and feed one's mind on a variety of businesses and nations, and return home rich with augmented gains." That, too, is a river of Babylon. When are your gains to stop? When are you going to be confident and rest assured in the money you have made? The richer you are, the more weary you will become. One shipwreck, and you come out naked. You will have good cause to bewail yourself in the river of Babylon, because you would not *sit and weep over the rivers of Babylon*.

§ 236. *Conversion in youth* (Ps. cxxxvi).

When we were born, the turmoil of this world caught us in our infancy, and choked us with the vain opinions of various errors while we were still in that tender age. Born

a future citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and in the predestination of God already a citizen, but meanwhile a temporary captive, what is the child to learn to love except what its parents have whispered into its ear? They instruct and teach him in lessons of avarice, rapine, daily lies, various worships of idols and demons, unlawful remedies in the shape of charms and amulets. What is he to do, being still an infant, a tender soul, with his eyes on the behaviour of his elders—what is he to do but to follow what he sees them doing? Babylon therefore has persecuted us, when we were small; but now that we are grown up, God has given us a knowledge of himself, that we should no longer follow the errors of our parents. Grown to manhood, youths say: *Truly it was a lie that our fathers worshipped, a vanity that did them no good* (Jer. xvi 19).

§ 237. *The rock was Christ* (Ps. cxxxvi; 1 Cor. x 4).

As you hear willingly, so still more willingly put in practice what you hear, if you would not be as the willows of Babylon, fed from her rivers and bearing no fruit. Sigh after the everlasting Jerusalem; whither your hope goes before, thither let your life follow; there we shall be with Christ. Christ is now our Head; he governs us now from above; he will embrace us in that city; we shall be *equal to the angels* of God. We should not dare to augur this of you, if Truth did not promise it (Luke xx 36). This then, brethren, desire, this think of day and night. Whatever worldly prosperity smiles upon you, be not confident of it; do not willingly hold parley with your passions. The serious enemy, let him be slain against the Rock; the insignificant enemy, let him be crushed against the Rock. Let the Rock be victorious. Be ye built on the Rock, if ye would not be carried away by river, winds or rain (Matt. vii 24-7). If you would be armed against the temptations of life, let the desire of the everlasting Jerusa-

lem grow and gather strength in your hearts. Captivity will pass, felicity will come; the enemy shall be damned in the end, and we shall celebrate a deathless triumph with our King.

§ 238. *What to pray for* (Ps. cxxxvii).

You come to church to-day to pray for something; you come with some desire; I hope it may be an innocent, even though it be a worldly one. But away with iniquity, away with worldliness; learn what to ask for, consider the nature of to-day's celebration.[1] We are keeping the feast of a holy and blessed woman, and you perhaps are hankering after earthly felicity. She for her holy desire abandoned the prosperity that she had on earth; she forsook her children, weeping over what they took to be the cruelty of their mother, who was hastening to a divine crown. Was she ignorant what to desire, what to trample upon? Nay, she knew how to sing in presence of the angels of God, and to desire their company, their holy and pure friendship, where she should die no more, where she should have experience of a Judge at whose tribunal lying should go for nothing. What then, are there no good things in that life? Yea, there are sheer good things, good things unmixed with evil, blissful securities in which you may rejoice as much as you wish, and none shall say to you, "Restrain yourself." But rejoicing here in earthly good things is painful and very dangerous, lest in your rejoicing you may stick fast and come to an evil end of your joy. For why does God blend griefs with earthly joys, except that by feeling of grief and bitterness we may learn to desire everlasting sweetness?

§ 239. *God's eye on the wicked* (Ps. cxxxvii).

Because you have heard, *God regardeth the humble*, possibly you may choose to be proud, and say in your

[1] The Feast of St Crispina, martyr.

heart, "God will not see me, because I am not humble; I shall do as I like." Wrong-headed man, would you say this, if you knew what you ought to love? Supposing God will not see you, are you not afraid of this very unwillingness to see you? If you salute some great man, your patron, and he, looking another way, does not see you, how hurt you feel! And do you fancy yourself secure if God does not see you? The Saviour does not see you, and the Spoiler does see you. Still, even God himself also sees you. It is said: *The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous* (Ps. xxxiii); so then the unrighteous may do as they like? *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers.* The unrighteous, who thought themselves secure, because the eyes of the Lord are not upon them, are they not afraid because his ears are not open to their prayers? But when you do things upon which you do not wish the eyes of the Lord to rest, you do not deserve to have his ears open to your prayers. And yet by evil doing you do not turn away the eyes of the Lord. For what follows? *The countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil, to destroy their memory from the land.* What, then, does the proud man gain for himself? That he may be *seen from afar*, not that he may be not seen. You do not see well what you see from afar. But God, though he sees from afar, sees you perfectly, and is not with you. The result is not that you are seen less perfectly, but that you are not with him by whom you are seen.

§ 240. *Darkening darkness* (Ps. cxxxviii).

Who are they who darken their own darkness? Evil men, perverse men, when they sin, are certainly in darkness; when they refuse to confess the sins they have committed, and go so far as to defend them, then they darken their own darkness. Therefore, if thou hast already sinned, thou art in darkness; but by confessing thy darkness thou

shalt come to have thy darkness lit up; whereas, by defending thy darkness, thou wilt darken thy own darkness. The Lord, on the other hand, does not darken our darkness, because he does not let our sins go unpunished; he scourges and so instructs us. You must know, brethren, that the whole load of the misery of mankind, under which the world groans, is a remedial pain, not a penal sentence. You see there is pain everywhere, fear everywhere, need everywhere, troubles everywhere. If God is instructing us by such scourges, so that our darkness be not darkened, let us acknowledge ourselves to be under his lash, and bless him for mingling bitterness with the sweets of temporal life, that we may not be blinded with the deliciousness of temporal delights and cease to desire those delights which are everlasting.

§ 241. *Equanimity* (Ps. cxxxviii).

*And the night shall be lit up as the day.* The prosperity and happiness of this world, temporal joy, temporal honour, that is, as it were, the light of this night. Adversity and the bitterness of hardship and ignominy are as the darkness of this night. In this night, in this mortal condition of human life, men have light and men have darkness, the light of prosperity, the darkness of adversity. But when Christ our Lord comes and dwells in the soul by faith, and promises another light, and inspires and bestows patience, and warns man not to be overjoyed in prosperity nor crushed by adversity—then does the Christian faithful man begin to use this world with indifference,[1] and to bless the Lord everywhere, not only in abundance, but also in shortage, not only in health, but also in sickness, verifying that chaunt: *I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise is ever in my mouth* (Ps. xxxiii). Thus then always, as well when

[1] "It is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things" (St Ignatius, Foundation of *Spiritual Exercises*).

this night shines as when it is dark—when prosperity smiles, when adversity frowns—be his praise ever in thy mouth, and *the darkness shall be as the light thereof.*

§ 242. *Comfort for imperfect Christians* (Ps. cxxxviii).

*Thine eyes have beheld my imperfection*, my imperfect one, my Peter, promising and denying, presuming and failing: still thine eyes have beheld him. After his third denial it came back to his mind what the Lord had foretold him: he *went forth and wept bitterly:* that weeping came of the regard of God (Luke xxii 61-2). This imperfect man, stumbling at the Lord's Passion, would doubtless have perished but that *thine eyes saw him*, and not only him, but all who were imperfect, until they were strengthened by the resurrection of Christ. Let not the imperfect fear, only let them progress. Let them not love their imperfection, and remain where they were found. Only let them progress so far as in them lies. Only let them add something, every day let them draw nigh [*quotidie accedant*], on no account let them withdraw from the Lord's Body, that in that Body, incorporated in those members, they may attain to having it said of them: *In thy book shall all be written.*[1]

§ 243. *My God* (Ps. cxxxix).

*I have said to the Lord, thou art my God.* These are men, and are not mine; thou art God, and art mine. Great is the cry of this prayer, it moves to confidence. He who is the true God, whose God is he not? Even bad men are under him, against their will. Still he is peculiarly

[1] A beautiful comment, characteristically Augustinian. But the literal sense is apparently that given by Keble, referring to the formation of the child in the womb:

> Thine eyes beheld me as I lay,
> Ere face or form began;
> And in thy book from day to day
> Was marked the growing man.

their God who enjoy him, serve him, gladly live under him. Such men call upon a God by whom they are to be saved; others fly from a God by whom they are to be damned. And yet the wicked man who will not have the Lord for his God, whither shall he fly from the God of all? It were well for him to be converted to the God of all, and by conversion make that God his God, and when set in the midst of sinners, seducers, hypocrites, proud upstarts, to say to God, whom by conversion he has made his God: *Thou art my God: Lord, hear the voice of my supplication.*

§ 244. *Preaching a necessity, silence a bliss* (Ps. cxxxix).

*A talkative man shall not go right upon earth.* What is his pleasure but to talk? He does not mind what he says, provided he may talk. It is impossible for such a man to go right. What manner of man, then, should the servant of God be? One who desires rather to listen than to speak, as it is written: *Let every man be quick to listen, slow to speak* (Jas. i 19). So far as possible, let him desire not to be under any necessity of speaking, talking and teaching. At present, brethren, we are speaking to you in order to teach you something. How much better if we all knew, and none had to teach another, so that there should not be one speaking, another hearing, but all hearing that One to whom it is said: *To my hearing thou shalt give joy and gladness* (Ps. l). Hence also John (the Baptist) did not so much rejoice in his preaching and speaking, but in hearing. *The friend of the bridegroom hears him, and rejoices with joy at the voice of the bridegroom* (John iii 29). Therefore, brethren, let each of you have in will, wish and desire, the joy of silence; but under necessity a voice for teaching. That voice is needed, when you are confronted with an uneducated and ignorant man.[1] If your delight is to be always teaching, you want to have always an

[1] Or more generally, an improvable man.

uninstructed hearer. But if you are benevolent and wish all to be learned, you do not wish always to have people to teach.[1]

§ 245. *Magdalen and the Pharisee* (Ps. cxl; Luke vii 36-50).

She wished to be cured, conscious of a great wound. But was the wound great, and the physician of small avail? The Pharisees would not have themselves touched by the unclean, they avoided all contact with sinners; and if ever they could not help coming in contact with them, they washed themselves. Thus they were washing, almost every hour of the day, not only their persons, but their utensils, beds, cups, dishes (Mark vii 3, 4). Since, then, the Pharisee knew this woman, whom he certainly would have thrust off, had she approached his feet, that his sanctity might not be violated—he had, you see, this sanctity in his body, not in his heart; and because he had it not in his heart, what sanctity he had in his body was false—since, then, he would have thrust her off himself, and our Lord did not do so, he thought our Lord did not know who she was, and said within himself: *If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman was that has approached his feet.* He did not say, *he would have thrust her off*, but *he would know*, as if his thrusting her off were the natural consequence of his knowing. But while our Lord had his eyes on that woman, he had his ears at the heart of that Pharisee. And therefore, hearing his thought, he proposed the parable which you know, *Two debtors*, etc.

§ 246. *The Memorial of the Fisherman* (Ps. cxl).

*As the fatness of the earth* [manure] *is scattered over the earth, so are our bones scattered about the grave.* We know

[1] Teaching is like government: when you are head and shoulders above the general level, you may teach or govern. When the general level rises above you, or you fall below it, yours it is to sink into obscurity and silence.

that the fatness of the earth means everything contemptible, for things that are contemptible among men fertilise the earth. As the earth receives a certain fatness from things contemptible and abject, so God's land has been fertilised by what the world despised, and thereby the Church's harvest has grown more abundantly. These contemptible things of earth, whereby the earth is fattened, I have no mind to name, it would be indecorous to do so; such is the enrichment and, so to speak, the fattening of the soil. But what says the text? *Lifting the needy from the earth, and raising up the poor from the dunghill* (Ps. cxii). Prostrate on the earth, like the enrichment scattered upon the earth, so lay Lazarus full of sores; nevertheless he was caught up by angels into Abraham's bosom (Luke xvi). *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps. cxv), contemptible in the eyes of the world, precious to the heavenly Husbandman. He knows the goodness that is there and the rich juice; he knows what to set store by, what to choose; but this world despises it. *The contemptible things of this world hath God chosen, and the things that are not, as the things that are*, that he may make void the things that are. From the dunghill were raised up Peter and Paul. In that they were done to death they were despised. Now that the earth has been enriched and the Church's harvest has grown, see what is noble and eminent in the world. When the Emperor comes to Rome, whither does he hasten? To the temple (palace) of the Emperor, or to the Memorial of the Fisherman?

§ 247. *A right intention* (Ps. cxli).

He calls charity *a higher way* (*supereminentiorem viam:* 1 Cor. xii 13), higher and more excellent. Nothing is higher than the way of charity, and only the humble walk therein. *Thou hast known my paths.* Thou knowest that what I suffer for thee, I suffer for love; charity in me beareth all things. But who does know these ways of

man? All human deeds are before the eyes of men, but it is uncertain with what intention they are done. How many, *measuring themselves by themselves* (2 Cor. x 12), say of us that this is what we seek in the Church: honours, praises, temporal advantages! How many say that I address you that you may cry out and praise me, that that is my end and intention when I speak! And how am I to show them that that is not my intention? I can only say, *Thou knowest my paths.* How do they know what even you do not know? How do they know what even I myself scarcely know? *For I do not judge myself, but he that judgeth me is the Lord* (1 Cor. iv 3). Therefore be it our pious and pure prayer to the Lord: *Teach me thy paths* (Ps. xxiv). But would you have him lead you by those paths? Be meek, be gentle, not fierce, not proud, do not shake out and arch your neck, *like the horse and mule that have no understanding* (Ps. xxxi). When you are meek and gentle, the Lord rides you, for *he will teach the meek his ways* (Ps. xxiv).

§ 248. *Sign of the Cross on the forehead* (Ps. cxli).

The pagan fancies he is putting a stumbling-block in my way when he says, "Do you worship a crucified God?" He finds fault with the cross of Christ, which he does not understand. Let him insult Christ crucified, while I see the cross of Christ on the foreheads of kings.[1] His laughing-stock is my salvation. No greater conceit than the conceit of the sick man who scoffs at his medicine. If he did not scoff at it, but took it, he might be cured. That cross is the sign of humility, but the man of huge pride does not recognise the power that would heal the swelling of his spirit. If I recognise it, it is a sign that I am on the way. So far am I from blushing at the cross, that I would have the cross of Christ in no secret place, but bear it on my forehead. Various sacraments we

[1] And even when I do not.

receive in various ways; some, as you know, we receive with the mouth: some all over the body.[1] But because we blush on the forehead, he who said, *Whoever shall be ashamed of me before men, I also will be ashamed of him before my Father who is in heaven* (Luke ix 26), he planted this very ignominy, which the pagans deride, on the spot which is in us the seat of shame. Let me not have my forehead bare, let the cross of my Lord cover it.[2]

§ 249. *Two happinesses, left hand and right* (Ps. cxliii).[3]

Attend, ye sons of light, ye sons of peace; attend, ye sons of the Church, ye, members of Christ, attend and see whom he calls *aliens*, whom he calls *strange children*, whom he calls *many waters* [read *aquas multas* with the psalmist], whom he calls the *malignant sword*. Attend, I pray, because you are in danger in the midst of those people; among their tongues you have to fight against the desires of your flesh; among their tongues, which are under the control of the devil, being the instruments wherewith he fights, you have to struggle, *not against flesh and blood, but against princes and powers, rulers of the world of this darkness* (Eph. vi 12). Attend, that you may mark yourselves off; attend, that you may not think that to be true happiness which men either for infirmity or malice wish for themselves. See, brethren, he certainly calls them *many waters*, he certainly calls them *strange children*, he certainly calls them the *malignant sword*. See the vanity that they utter, and beware how you use such language. Therefore is not this happiness? I ask the sons of the kingdom of heaven, I ask the race of the resurrection everlasting, I ask the Body of Christ, the members of

[1] As baptism by immersion, then general in the Church.

[2] In reference, apparently, to the sacrament of Confirmation. *Cf.* Apoc. vii 3, xiv 1; Ezech. ix 4, 6.

[3] On this psalm St Augustine, as his manner often is, moderates the language he had used elsewhere, on Ps. cxxvii, § 221.

Christ, the temple of God. Well then, is not this happiness, to have healthy sons, well-dressed daughters, full cellars, abundance of cattle, no falling down, I will not say of a house-wall, but even of a fence, no uproar and noise in the streets, but quiet, peace, abundance, plenty of all things in private houses and in cities? Well, is not this happiness? Or ought the just to shun it? Or do you not find the house of the just man abounding in all these things, full of this prosperity? Was not the house of Abraham abounding in gold, silver, sons, servants, cattle? Did not the holy patriarch Jacob, flying into Mesopotamia from the face of Esau his brother, become rich in the time of service, and return rendering thanks to the Lord his God that he had crossed the river with no more than his staff, and now came back with such abundance of cattle and children? What do we say? Is not this happiness? Be it so, but it is happiness of the left hand. What is "of the left hand"? Temporal, mortal, corporeal. I do not ask you to shun it, but neither must you count it happiness of the right hand. These people were not malignant or vain merely because they had abundance of these things, but because what ought to have been on the left hand, that they put on the right. *Therefore their right hand was a right hand of iniquity*. What ought they to have put on the right hand? God, eternity, the unfailing years of God, of which it is said, *Thy years shall not fail* (Ps. ci). There is the right hand, there ought to be our desire. Let us use the left hand for time, let us desire the right for eternity. *If riches pour in, set not thy heart upon them* (Ps. lxi). If you set your heart on affluence and riches, you will be making a right hand of the left. Correct yourselves, recognise Wisdom's embrace, of whom it is said: *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me* (Cant. ii 6). See the holy love-song, see the Canticle of Canticles, celebrating the nuptials of Christ and his Church. *His left hand is under my head*,

he will not fail me in temporal necessities; but that same left hand shall be under my head, it shall not be put above my head, but shall be under my head, that his right hand may embrace me, promising life everlasting. So is fulfilled what was written to Timothy: *having the promise of the present life and of that which is to come* (1 Tim. iv 8). And again: *Seek first the kingdom of God*, that is the right hand, *and all these things shall be added to you* (Matt. vi 33). You shall have here, he says, both riches and glory, and in the world to come life everlasting: with my left hand I will support your infirmity, and with my right hand I will crown your perfection. Or can any one say that the apostles, in leaving all things, remained without riches in this world? Then where is the promise of the left hand, *he shall receive in this world an hundredfold?*[1] And, indeed, what can be wanting to the man of God? Were he an unbeliever, he would have one house, or a few houses. *The whole world is part of the riches of the faithful man* (Prov. xvii 6, in the Septuagint Greek). See his left hand full under my head, *shall receive in this world a hundredfold as much;* see his right hand embracing me, *and in the world to come life everlasting.* Rightly in another place does Wisdom say of herself: *In her right hand are years of life, and in her left hand riches and honour* (Prov. iii 6). Whence, then, these vain babblers? Why has their mouth spoken vanity? Because *their right hand is a right hand of iniquity.* I do not blame them for that *their sons were as new-planted vines, sure set from their youth*, nor that *their daughters were adorned after the likeness of a temple*,

[1] *Amen I say unto you, there is none that shall have left house or brethren, or sisters or mother, or father or sons or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel, but he shall receive an hundredfold as much now, in this present time, houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and sons and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come life everlasting* (Mark x 29, 30). A clear prediction of the religious life! Some refer the *hundredfold* to the world to come. But this interpretation flies in the face of Scripture. Cf. *Having nothing and possessing all things* (2 Cor. vi 10).

nor that other abundance and earthly peace attended upon them. But why do I blame them? *They have called the people blessed who have these things.* They have lost the true right hand; malignant, perverse men, they have turned God's benefits the wrong way about [for *vestierunt* read *verterunt*]. They have put on the right hand what was on the left. But thou, O David, thou, O Body of Christ, you, members of Christ, you, not alien children, but sons of God, what say you? *Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord.* Have, then, the left hand, but on the left; desire the right hand, that you may be put on the right hand (Matt xxv 33 *sq.*). They had the left hand on the left, among whom *he hungered and they gave him to eat; he thirsted, and they gave him to drink; he was a stranger, and they took him in; he was naked, and they clothed him.* All this they took from the left hand, and carried over to the works of the right hand, that they themselves might be placed on the right hand. Those vain-babbling, stranger children said: *Blessed is the people who have these things;* do you say with us, *Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord.*[1]

§ 250. *Gratuitousness of grace* (Ps. cxliv).

Brethren, if you would speak out and declare grace, drink in grace, learn grace, understand grace. Before we were, we were nought at all; and we were made men from being before nothing. Then further, even as men, we were of the line of a sinful and malicious parent, and were *by nature children of wrath even as the rest* (Eph. ii 3). Let us mark, then, the gracious favour of God, not only that whereby he made us, but also that whereby he remade us. We owe our justification to the same Being to whom we

[1] St Augustine doubtless gives the right sense of the Septuagint and the Latin. But the modern Hebrew reads, *Let our sons, let our daughters, let our sheep,* etc., making of the passage a little inset psalm—probably of older date than the rest of the composition—begging for temporal blessings upon the people of God, after the manner of Ps. cxxvii.

owe our existence. Let no one attribute his being to God, and attribute his justification to himself. It is a better thing for thee to be justified than to be a man. Wouldst thou attribute the lower gift to God, and the higher to thyself? Give it all to him, praise him in it all, fall not from the hand of thy Maker. Before thou wert man, thou wert clay (Gen. ii 7); before thou wert clay, thou wert nothing. But not only for that creation must thou thank thy Maker; hear of another creation whereby he made thee. *Not of works, lest perchance any one should glory* (Tit. iii 5). *By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves* (Eph. ii 8). Where you hear of grace, understand a gratuitous gift. If the gift is gratuitous, thou didst contribute nothing, thou didst merit nothing. If anything is rendered to merit it is a reward, not a grace (Rom. iv 4). Fain would I expound this more openly for the sake of the arrogant, for the sake of them that are pleasing to themselves, for the sake of them that are *ignorant of God's righteousness, and seek to establish their own* (Rom. x 3). *Ye are saved by grace, not of yourselves, but it is a gift of God.* But perhaps we have done something to merit the gifts of God. *Not of works, that no man may glory.* What then, do we not do good works? Yes, we do, but how? By his working in us; *for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, that we should walk in them.*[1]

§ 251. *True motive of thankfulness* (Ps. cxliv).

Why do you love God? "Because he has given me health." That is clear, he has given it, for there is no wholeness but of God. "Because he has given me a rich

[1] The pith of all this is contained in the saying of the Council of Trent: "Nothing of the things that precede justification, whether faith or works, merits the very grace of justification" (Sess. vi, cap. 6). The "first justification," or passage of a soul from deadly sin to the state of grace, whether by baptism, which St Paul has ever in view, or by penance, is ever wholly unmerited and gratuitous.

wife—when I had nothing—one who lays herself out to please me." Quite right, so he has. "He has given me children, many and good, he has given me a household of servants, and store of all good things." Is that why you love him? Given that, do you seek after nothing more? Be a hungry beggar; still knock at the door of the Father of the family; he has still more to give thee. With all these things that thou hast received, thou art still in a state of beggary, and knowest it not. Thou still wearest a ragged vesture of flesh, not yet hast thou received the robe of immortality, and dost thou give over asking, as one who already has got his fill? *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill* (Matt. v 6). If God is good for having given thee these things, how much more blessed shalt thou be when he has given thee himself! So many things thou hast desired of him: I beg thee, desire also himself. What if God willed to take away all those things in which thou rejoicest? Shall he then be loved no more? shall there be no one to say: *The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away* (Job i 21)? Then shalt thou be right, when in all the good things that God does he pleases thee, and in all the ills that thou sufferest he does not displease thee.

§ 252. *Delay of conversion* (Ps. cxliv).

God calls you now, exhorts you now, is waiting for you to enter into yourself, and do you delay? Great is his mercy, in making the time of your life uncertain, so that you do not know when you shall go hence, and may be converted some day, since you may expect to go any day. If he had appointed one fixed time for all, he would have made sin abound through assurance of a temporary respite. Both hope and despair are to be apprehended in this matter of sins. Hear the cry of one in despair: "I am sure to be damned, why not do anything I like?" Hear the cry of one in hope: "Great is the mercy of the Lord; when I am

converted, he will forgive me everything; why not do anything I like?" Woe to despair, woe to perverse hope. How does the mercy of God meet this double danger and double evil? What say you, who were minded to sin in despair? "Already I am marked out for damnation; why should I not do as I like?" Hear the Scripture: *I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live* (Ezech. xxxiii 11). By this utterance of God he is brought back to life. But there is another snare to be feared, lest by that very hope he may come to sin more. "When I am converted, God will forgive me everything: I will do as I like." Do you, too, listen to Scripture: *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day; for his anger will come suddenly, and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee* (Ecclus. v 7). Say not, then: "To-morrow I will be converted, to-morrow I will give God satisfaction; and all my sins of to-day and yesterday will be forgiven me." You say right, because God has promised pardon to your conversion. But he has not promised to-morrow to your delay.

§ 253. *Perfect praise* (Ps. cxlv).

The delights of our spirit are the divine canticles, where even weeping is not without joy. To a faithful man, a pilgrim on earth, there is no pleasanter recollection than of the city away from which he is a pilgrim, though even that recollection, while he is on pilgrimage, is not without grief and sighing. Nevertheless, the sure hope of coming home consoles and animates our sadness on the journey. Let the words of God enrapture your heart, and let him who is your possessor claim to himself his possession—your minds, that is, that your attention be not turned away to another object. Let each of you be all here, and yet not here; let him be wholly taken up with the word of God, sounding on earth, for therefore is God with us that we may be with him. To be with us, he came down to us, and

makes us to ascend to him, to be with him. Meanwhile, he has not disdained our pilgrimage, for he is never away from home who has created all things. Meanwhile, brethren, since hope feeds us here, and there is no perfect life for us but that which is promised—here are groans, here temptations, here hardships, here dangers—our soul shall praise the Lord as he ought to be praised then when our whole business shall be that very praise. *I will praise the Lord in my life.*

§ 254. *Reward of praising God* (Ps. cxlvi).

I should be quite willing to praise God, someone says, if he would give me something for praising him. For who praises gratuitously even a man? The panegyrists of men expect some reward;[1] is the praiser of God to expect, ask, or hope for no reward at all? A weak man is praised, and something is hoped for from him; the Almighty is praised, and is there to be no pay? Can it be that what I desire he cannot give? What can man desire that is not in the power of God? In praising man, possibly you may desire something that he cannot afford; have no fear of that in praising God. We ought, then, to praise God in hope of a reward, not, however, expecting him to give us what we set our heart on. He is a Father, and gives not what his sons do ill to desire. Let us praise and hope and desire, not this or that, but what he judges should be given us whom we praise. He knows what it is expedient for us to have given us; let us fix our heart on that which it is profitable for us to receive.

§ 255. *The number of the stars* (Ps. cxlvi).

What great thing is it for God to *number the multitude of the stars?* Even men have tried to do that. Let them look to it, whether they have been able to fulfil their pur-

[1] Such as Augustine himself got, in his younger days, for a panegyric on the Emperor at Milan, as he relates in his *Confessions*.

pose; still, they would not try unless they had hope of fulfilling it. Let us leave it to them, what they have been able to do and how far they have got in their counting; but, I reckon, it is no great thing for God to number all the stars. Can it be that he is taking a census of them lest he forget? Can it be a great thing of God to number the stars, to whom the very hairs of our heads are numbered? (Matt. x 30) It is plain, brethren, that God wishes us to understand something else.[1] The stars are certain lights in the Church, consoling our darkness, all those of whom the Apostle says: *Ye appear as lights in the world* (Phil. ii 15). These are the stars that God numbers, all who are to reign with him, all who are to be aggregated to the Body of his Son. Whoever is unworthy, is not numbered.[2] There are more within these walls than are to be in the kingdom of God in the heavenly Jerusalem; they are supernumeraries. Let everyone consider whether he be a light shining in the darkness, whether he be not seduced by the darksome wickedness of the world; if he be not seduced nor overcome, he shall be as a star which God already numbers. *And calls them all by their names;* there is the whole reward. We have it that there are certain names before God; that God may know our names, that is what we should desire, that is what we should attend to, that is what we should make our business, so far as we can; not rejoice in other things, not even in certain spiritual gifts (*cf.* 1 Cor. xii, xiii). Therefore, when the disciples returned from their mission, exulting and saying, *Lord, even the unclean spirits are subject to us for thy name*, he who *numbereth the multitude of the stars, and calleth them all by their names*, knowing that many would say, *Have we not cast out devils in thy name?* to

[1] As is his wont, St Augustine abandons the literal sense as insufficient, and seeks a mystical. *Cf.* on Ps. cxxvii.

[2] *Qui indignus est, nec numeratur.* He is not numbered among the elect, because he has himself made himself unworthy to be reckoned there, not because from the beginning God never had any real will to record his name. *Hoc tamen vix Augustinus.*

whom he would say in the end, *I never knew you*—because he did not number them in the multitude of the stars, or call them by their names—our Lord replied: *Rejoice not in this that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven* (Luke x 17, 20).[1]

§ 256. *Impatience the note of the heresiarch* (Ps. cxlvi; *cf.* Newman, *Historical Sketches*, iii 193).

Let human voices be silent, let human thoughts rest; let them not reach out to things incomprehensible as though they were going to comprehend them; enough that they are going to partake of them. Do not, therefore, look for what cannot be adequately expressed in language—I think you see that—but return to the Saviour's remedy (Luke xviii 17); let hardness of heart be crushed, obstinacy of mind broken, be there accusation of evil done, and renewal of goodness. It is well for him to make confession of infirmity, who would arrive at divinity. Therefore the Lord shows thee what thou oughtest to do in a difficulty of understanding, as the text goes on: *The Lord taketh up the meek.* Thou understandest nothing, little or nothing, thou canst not follow; honour the Scripture of God, honour the Word of God, even when it is not plain. Put off understanding, and be satisfied for the present with piety (*differ pietate intelligentiam*). Be not forward to accuse the obscurity, or what you may take to be the perversity of Scripture. There is nothing perverse there, but something that is obscure: not that understanding is to be denied to

[1] While a man is a member of the Church, especially if he be in the state of grace, his name is for the time written up in heaven for salvation. That fact he can fairly well know, and rejoice in. But he cannot rejoice in the fact of his final perseverance, for it is not known to him (Council of Trent, Sess. vi, can. 16). Judas was of the number of those addressed in the text (Luke x 20). For us mortal men, to have our names written in heaven is to be justified for the time being. " If any man saith that the grace of justification is not bestowed except upon the predestinate, let him be anathema " (Trent, *ib.*, can. 17).

thee, but to give thee exercise before thou receivest it. Therefore, where there occurs an obscure passage, the Physician has made it, that thou mayest knock to have it opened. He has wished thee to have exercise in knocking, he has wished it to be opened upon thy knocking. By knocking thou shalt be exercised, and by exercise thou shalt be broadened out; and being broadened out, thou wilt be able to take in what is given. Therefore be not indignant at the place being shut; be mild, be meek. Do not kick against the obscurity, and say: "The thing would be better put, if it were put thus." When art thou able thus to speak or judge of the expediency of the expression? It is said as it ought to have been said. The patient does not judge of the medicine; the physician knows how to compound it; believe him who has thy cure in hand. There has arisen a sect of perdition, the Manichees. It has scoffed at the Scriptures, received and read. It has taken upon itself to reprehend what it has not understood, and by inveighing against things not understood it has ensnared many. But they who have taken this course have been humbled even on earth, so as to be unable any longer to conceive aught except what is perceived by earth, by the body. Incapable of any appreciation of an incorporeal Deity, whatever they think of God, they think in terms of body.

§ 257. *The Wild Beast Show* (Ps. cxlvii).[1]

There are those who have not come to church to-day, because it is the Show. Not only the magistrates who give these shows are hard hit and lose their money, but they are hit harder who willingly look on at such exhibitions.

[1] Called *munus*, "the gift." The Magistrate, who gave it and stood the expenses, was the *Editor*. He was often half-ruined. SS Augustine and John Chrysostom endeavoured, with but indifferent success, to keep their flocks from attending these shows, which still even in the fifth century retained much of their original pagan character of idolatry and obscenity and cruelty.

The pocket of the former is emptied of gold; the conscience of the latter is despoiled of the riches of righteousness. The *Editores* lament having to sell their farms; how should *peccatores* lament losing their souls! I beg you, offer prayers on their behalf. Let them see and feel how they are wasting their time; and after long eager gazing at the sights that please them, let them at last gaze upon themselves and be displeased with themselves. We rejoice to see that having already happened in the case of many. We ourselves once sat there, and were mad; how many, think you, are now sitting there who are destined to be not only Christians, but even Bishops! We conjecture the future from the past; from what has been done we foretell what God is about to do. Let your prayers be watchful, not for nothing go your groans, brethren. Surely they that have escaped are heard on behalf of them that are still in danger, because themselves have been in the number of the imperilled. God will bring back his people from the captivity of Babylon; and the number of saints, bearing the image of God, shall be complete. At times when the theatre or amphitheatre rises, and there pours out from the auditorium that crowd of lost souls, having in mind the fancies of their vanity, and feeding their memories with things not only useless but pernicious, they catch sight, it may be, of some servants of God[1] passing by, and knowing them by sight, or by their dress or tonsure, they say among themselves or to themselves: "Look at those poor wretches, how much they lose!" Brethren, let us ask the Lord on behalf of this their benevolence, if benevolence it is to be called; they grieve at our losing what they love, let us pray that they may not lose what we love.

§ 258. *Superfluities* (Ps. cxlvii).

We have many superfluities, if we stick to nothing but what is necessary; for if we seek empty and profitless

[1] Monks or clerics.

luxuries, nothing is enough for us. Seek, brethren, what suffices for the work of God, not what suffices for your covetousness and greed. Your greed is not the work of God. Your frame, your body, your soul, that is all the work of God. Seek what suffices, and you will see how little that is. Out of what God has given, you take what suffices; the superfluities that remain over are other men's necessaries. The superfluities of the rich are the necessities of the poor. To possess superfluities is to possess other men's property.[1]

§ 259. *The love of peace* (Ps. cxlvii).

*Who hath assured to thy frontiers peace.* How have you all shown signs of joy! Love this peace, my brethren. We are much delighted when the love of peace cries from your hearts. How has the very mention of it delighted you! I had said nothing, I had explained nothing, I had given out the verse, and you raised a cry. What was it on your part that cried? The love of peace. What sight did I show your eyes? Whence do you cry, if you do not love? Whence do you love, if you do not see? Peace is invisible. What is the eye whereby it is seen so as to be loved? There would be no acclamation if it were not loved. These are the sights that God exhibits, sights of things invisible. With what beauty has the idea of peace smitten your hearts! Why should I speak of peace or of the praise of peace? Your affection has forestalled all words of mine; I am not fulfilling the task, I cannot, I am too weak. Let us put off all the praises of peace to that country of peace. There we shall praise it more fully where we shall have it more fully. If we so love its begin-

[1] *Res alienae possidentur quum superflua possidentur.* There is an underlying vein of truth here, but, taken at its surface value, the proposition is (for our days) dangerous, unpracticable, and needing so much modification that we may call it, as it stands, false. Neither St Augustine nor any other bishop could ever have enforced it on the conscience of the faithful.

ning in us, how shall we praise its perfection! See then, this is what I say, beloved sons, sons of the kingdom, citizens of Jerusalem, that in Jerusalem is the vision of peace, and all who love peace are blessed in her, and they enter in when the gates are shut and the bolts fastened. This peace, the very name of which you so love and cherish, go after it, desire it, love it in your home, in your business, in your wives, in your children, in your servants, in your friends, in your enemies.

§ 260. *Easter time* (Ps. cxlviii).

The praise of God ought to be the practice of our present life, because the praise of God shall be the joy of our future life everlasting, and none can be made fit for that future life who has not practised for it now. Now therefore we praise God, but we also petition God. Our praise is expressive of our gladness, our prayer of our sighing. There is promised us something which we have not yet; and because he is truthful who has promised, we rejoice in hope; but because we have it not yet, we sigh in desire. It is well for us to persevere in desire until what is promised comes, and sighs pass, and praise alone has place. By reason of these two seasons, one of which now is in the temptations and tribulations of this life, the other which then shall be in security and unbroken exaltation, there has been instituted for us the celebration of two seasons, before Easter and after Easter. The season before Easter signifies the tribulation in which we now are; the season we are at present celebrating after Easter signifies the happiness in which we afterwards shall be. Our celebration before Easter is realised now; our celebration after Easter points to what we do not yet grasp. Therefore, that former season we make an exercise of fasting and prayer; at this season we relax our fasts and occupy ourselves with praises, for such is the meaning of Halleluia, "Praise the Lord." What we signify after the resurrection of the Lord, we shall

hold after our own resurrection. The Lord's Passion shows us the life of present necessity, how we must labour and suffer tribulation and finally die; the Lord's Resurrection and glorification shows us the life we are finally to receive, when he shall come to render to all men their deserts, evil to the evil, good to the good. Halleluia, "Praise the Lord," you say to your neighbour, and he says it to you. But praise with the whole depth of your being; let not your tongue and your voice alone praise the Lord, but your conscience, your life, your deeds. We are praising him now that we are gathered together in the church; when each of us goes home, you may think that he ceases to praise God. Let him not cease to lead a good life, and then he is always praising God.

§ 261. *Bodily temptations* (Ps. cxlviii).

Temptations assail us daily, sensual delights daily assail us. Though we do not consent, still we suffer annoyance and have to struggle. There is great danger of one being overcome in the struggle. Even though we overcome and resist such delights, still we suffer annoyance in having to resist them. The enemy ceases not, dies not, except in the resurrection of the dead. Let not the love of Babylon please you, forget not the city of Jerusalem. Though your body is still kept in Babylon, let your heart be forwarded to Jerusalem.

§ 262. *Why-why and how-how* (Ps. cxlviii).

Whatever happens here against our will, you should know happens not but by the will of God, by his providence, by his ordination, by his assent, by his laws. Though we do not understand why such a thing happens, let us put it down to his providence, allow that it happens not without cause, and beware of blaspheming. When we begin to dispute about the works of God, "Why this? why that? He should not have done so-and-so, that's

bad "—what has become of the praise of God? You have lost your Halleluia. In all things consider how you may please God and praise his handiwork. Strolling into a blacksmith's shop, you would not dare to find fault with bellows, anvils, hammers. The lay critic finds fault with everything. But one who, though he has not professional skill, still has a man's faculty of reflection, says to himself: "Not without cause are those bellows put there: the workman knows why, though I do not know." In a workshop a man dares not blame the workman; and yet in this world man finds fault with God.

§ 263. *Money wasted on games* (Ps. cxlix).

I wish to say something—listen more attentively—about the glory of the saints. There is no man but loves glory. But a glory of fools is that popular glory, alluring, deceptive, stirring a man to be moved at the praises of vain men, and make it his aim in life to have his name published by all manner of men indiscriminately and in any indiscriminate fashion. This drives men mad, puffs them up with pride; empty within, swollen without, they are ready even to ruin themselves by making costly presents to actors, wild-beast-hunters, and charioteers. They despise the poor, the people does not cry out that the poor man should receive anything, but it does cry out that the hunter of wild beasts should receive. They are maddened by the cry of madmen; and all go mad together, performer, spectator, and giver. Christ reproaches his people and says: "I have not received of you as much as these hunters have received: to give to them, you have given of mine; *I was naked and you clothed me not*" (Matt. xxv 42). You choose to clothe a hunter; perhaps you may see him beaten, and blush for him. Christ is never beaten; he has beaten the devil, and beaten for you; such a victor you refuse to clothe, because over his clothing there is less clamour, less madness.

§ 264. *Iron bonds* (Ps. cxlix).

What are chains of iron and not golden chains? Iron as long as men fear; let them love, and their chains will be of gold. *Perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment* (1 John iv 18). There is the iron chain. And yet, unless a man begins to worship God for fear, he will not arrive at love.[1] So he begins with iron chains, and ends with a necklace of gold. Wisdom would not *put a necklace of gold about thy neck*, had she not first bound thee in iron chains (Prov. i 9; *cf.* the story of Joseph, Ps. civ 17, 18; Gen. xli 42). Thou didst begin in fear, thou art made perfect in arriving at wisdom. How many there are who shrink from doing evil because they fear hell! They do not yet love righteousness. If they were promised impunity, and told, "Do as you like, it shall all go unpunished," they would push the onset of their lusts to every extreme of wickedness.[2] And especially, brethren, would this be the case with kings and nobles, to whom it is not easily said: "What hast thou done?" There comes to us a powerful man of the world; his wife has offended him, or he has got a passion for another, fairer or richer; he wants to put away the wife he has, and does not. His feet were already slipping, but they are held in fetters; he

[1] *Nisi timore incipiat homo Deum colere, non perveniet ad amorem.* Religion, says Cardinal Newman, is founded on a "presentation of One who is angry with us and threatens evil; its large and deep foundation is the sense of sin and guilt, and without this sense there is for man, as he is, no genuine religion" (*Grammar of Assent*, pp. 391-2, 400). "We ought much to praise the fear of his Divine Majesty, a great help towards getting out of mortal sin, where the man does not attain to anything better or more profitable" (last words of St Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*).

[2] A man does not sin by the sin which he would in fact commit in other circumstances than those in which he is placed. Then only would he sin, were he positively to desire those circumstances, and positively to will the sin under such circumstances. Such a conditional volition, however, says Vasquez, would generally lack that plenitude which is requisite for mortal sin.

has iron chains, he fears God. He is told: "God will damn you, if you do." *Art thou tied to a wife? seek not to be loosed* (1 Cor. vii 27). It is hard, it is iron. Listen, you young man; they are iron chains, be in no hurry to put your feet in (*nolite pedes mittere*): when you have put them in, you will be tighter bound in fetters. Even bishops' hands rivet such fetters upon you. Do not manacled men fly to the Church, and find deliverance here ?[1] (Other) men fly hither, wishing to send away their wives; (but no), here they are tighter bound, no man looses those fetters.[2] *What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder* (Matt. xix 6). But the bonds are hard; who does not know that ? The apostles themselves grieved over that hardness and said: *If such be the condition of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry* (Matt. xix 10). If the fetters are of iron, it is not expedient to put one's feet into them. And the Lord: *Not all men take that word ; but whoever can take, let him take* (Matt. xix 11, 12). *Art thou loose from a wife? seek not a wife* (1 Cor. vii 27); bind not thyself in chains of iron.[3]

§ 265. *Final conclusion* (Ps. cl).

Not without purpose, it seems to me, is the fiftieth psalm about penance, the hundredth about mercy and judgement, and the hundred and fiftieth about the praise of God in his saints.[4] For thus we make our way to an everlasting and happy life, first by condemning our sins, then by living well, so that after we have condemned our evil life, we may merit life everlasting. Our predestination

[1] He is referring to men, not metaphorically but properly bound in fetters of iron, who fled to the church and to the bishop for a sentence to set them free from an unjust penalty.

[2] The bishop will grant no divorce.

[3] We may observe that the holy bond of matrimony, to a husband who loves his wife as a Christian should, is not a chain of iron, but of gold.

[4] So St Augustine understands *in sanctis ejus*, not " in his holy places."

is not in us, but secretly with God, in his foreknowledge. But the remaining three things are in us—vocation, justification, glorification. We are called by the preaching of penance, for so the Lord began to preach his Gospel: *Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matt. iv 17). We are justified in the call of mercy and fear of judgement; hence it is said: *Lord, in thy name save me, and in thy power judge me* (Ps. liii). He fears not judgement who has beforehand obtained salvation.[1] When called, we renounce the devil by penance, so as not to remain under his yoke. When justified, we are healed by mercy, so as to have no fear of judgement. When glorified, we pass to life everlasting, where we praise God without end.

AMEN.

[1] That is how, for a soul once admitted to heaven, the Day of Judgement has lost all its terrors.

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